

## Eye to Eye

Posted originally on the [Archive of Our Own](http://archiveofourown.org/works/37378663) at <http://archiveofourown.org/works/37378663>.

### Rating:

Mature

### Archive Warning:

No Archive Warnings Apply

### Category:

M/M

### Fandom:

Naruto

### Relationship:

Hatake Kakashi/Uchiha Sasuke

### Characters:

Hatake Kakashi, Uchiha Sasuke, Uchiha Fugaku, Uchiha Mikoto, Uchiha Itachi, Uzumaki Naruto, Yamanaka Ino, Namikaze Minato, Nara Shikaku, Team Ro (Naruto) - Character, Uchiha Shisui, Tsunade (Naruto)

### Additional Tags:

Alternate Universe - Canon Divergence, No Uchiha Massacre, Arranged Marriage, Sexual Tension, Falling In Love, Age Difference, Clan Politics, Alternative Dai-nana-han | Team 7 (Naruto), Uchiha Sasuke & Uzumaki Naruto Friendship, Uchiha Sasuke & Yamanaka Ino Friendship, Flirting, Engagement, is marriage kink a thing?, Sex, Sexual Content, Wedding Night

### Language:

English

### Stats:

Published: 2022-03-01 Completed: 2022-05-29 Words: 30,449  
Chapters: 4/4

# Eye to Eye

by [Embers](#)

## Summary

When Kakashi had accepted Obito's gift, he hadn't had time to think of the consequences. Returning to Konoha and the Uchiha clan's wrath, he finds he can no longer remain on his island of one when he's betrothed to the clan head's child as a gesture of loyalty.

## Notes

I'm a stress writer. Kind of like a stress baker? So the more things I should be doing the more likely I am writing fic instead and inevitably procrastinating everything else. So.

This is like...an AU of an AU. I mentioned in [Serendipity](#) that an idea had been floated of Kakashi and Sasuke being betrothed which never came to fruition. But what if it did? Also their age gap here is a little less at 12 years, had to adjust the timeline slightly so Sasuke being born coincides with Kakashi getting the eye.

NOTE: General content warning for Kakashi being Kakashi, read: morbid, depressed, traumatized, generally lacking in self worth.

See the end of the work for more [notes](#)

# Kakashi

“You want me to marry your unborn baby?”

Minato sighs, looking apologetically at Fugaku before he turns back to Kakashi who has the good sense to feel cowed despite his desire to sprint out of the meeting room they are in at the Tower. In his defence, he'd only been released from the hospital that morning and despite being confined to bed for days while medical nin poked and prodded at him, he hasn't had a wink of sleep. Between the nightmares and the audible yelling outside the hospital protesting his very existence since word got out about him coming back with his dead teammate's eye implanted into his head, rest has been elusive.

“The *clan*,” Fugaku emphasizes with a scowl, “feels some sort of... reciprocal commitment is in order given your possession of the Sharingan.”

Kakashi might be twelve, but he's not stupid. He's not a jonin for nothing and despite the fact that he should, Uchiha Fugaku doesn't scare him. Not much scares Kakashi anymore.

“If I'm honest, it kind of seems like a raw deal for you guys.”

He can see Minato's frown from the corner of his eye and it does make him feel a little bad. It's not his sensei's fault that this is happening, he guesses, though he would have liked to have seen a little more opposition from the man when the Hokage had called the four of them together for this meeting. The Sandaime seems content to let Minato take the lead on this, his ever present pipe filling the room with smoke that makes Kakashi's nose twitch behind his mask.

“Kakashi. Please?”

Minato's voice is firm enough to get him to shut up for the rest of the meeting, zoning out as his fate is tossed around between the village and the Uchiha clan. He'd never really longed to have a clan, couldn't miss what he'd never had, though he drank in his father's lessons and stories on their traditions like a boy parched. Now though, he wishes he did. Someone to fight for him when he doesn't have the energy or will to fight for himself. Because it would be for himself alone and there is little motivation for him in that. What consequence is it to anyone *else* what direction Hatake Kakashi is pulled to? He'd been lauded until now. A genius. A once in a generation shinobi. Really, there is nowhere left to go but down, though he admits the descent is beginning sooner than expected.

Later, his sensei plys him with a meal as he explains the arrangement Kakashi's been forced into.

"You've been promised to Fugaku and Mikoto's second born, officially," Minato begins, like he's some sort of chattel, "There will be a signing ceremony soon to officiate the agreement. An engagement will occur likely when your intended is of age, at sixteen. When they are eighteen, you will wed. I realize this is not what you pictured for yourself but...this is the way it must be."

Minato isn't one for beating around the bush, something Kakashi usually appreciates. He pokes at the remnants of his dinner, turning the information over in his head.

He does the math. He'd be thirty by the time the child in Mikoto's womb is eighteen.

Kakashi shrugs.

“Fine.”

He'll get the last laugh.

There's no way he's making it that far.

\* \* \*

The clan council is the last place Kakashi ever wants to be. He'd even prefer an afternoon with the Uchiha elders to *this* . At least the Uchiha are interesting in their intensity.

He listens to the dull agenda of items that precede his sudden future nuptials for all of two minutes before he's looking around the room boredly. He alternates between meeting the curious and disapproving gazes he finds sent his way head on until they avert their eyes in discomfort, and counting the decorative gold Uzushio crests painted around the ceiling.

He knows the betrothal has come up once the room is suddenly filled with grumbles and shuffles, more animated than those during the earlier discussions. It had seemed outrageous and ineffective to him, to tie him to a contract that couldn't be fulfilled for so long, when other Uchiha closer to his age existed. But he'd realized during the officiating ceremony at the Uchiha compound that the clan wanted to punish Fugaku as much as Kakashi and no other Uchiha child would do. A gesture of good faith, from the clan head who chose to go against so many of their wishes. He thinks it would have been easier for the man to demand the eye removed, it would have been his right, and he can't imagine why Fugaku would make such a sacrifice, would have his future *child* make one. Then again his first born, Itachi, is already betrothed to another so perhaps the child would have suffered much the same fate regardless. Kakashi has no status, no power, no backing. He is an easy acquisition and likely to be useful. It is one of

his few points of pride.

Perhaps they share the opinion that the event is unlikely to come to pass, in the end, anyway.

None of the other clans are particularly happy about the Uchiha formally holding the last Hatake's loyalty, but they have no logical reason to oppose it. Kakashi isn't expected to say much, which is as much of a relief as it is insulting. When it's over, he's looking forward to finding an empty training field to decimate and hopefully not think about any of this for the next sixteen years, or until death, whichever comes first.

He's betting on death, but he'd never been lucky.

He's about to head off when a hand lands on his head. He recognizes the chakra quick enough not to act drastically but his fingers twitch with a current anyway. He peers up to see a familiar tanned face and thick dark hair, pulled back into the distinct ponytail. The long fingers in his hair massage his scalp slightly and it's enough to get him to relax like one of his ninken, a trick Sakumo had never failed to exploit and probably shared with the other man.

"Hey, kid. Come with me."

Kakashi knows better than to refuse an order from Nara Shikaku.

The older man doesn't say anything and Kakashi peeks up at him as they walk, at the single long scar that cuts across his face and the assured stance he moves with. He'll be the next jonin commander and Kakashi doesn't feel worried about being under his leadership. The Nara are smart and reasonable, generally stay out of the spotlight as far as clans go, and yet are among the oldest and most established

aside from the Uchiha and Hyuuga. He wouldn't have minded becoming *their* ward, thinking of Shikaku's low drawl and amused grins in contrast to Fugaku's gruff dismissals and judgemental eyes.

They stop at a food stall and Shikaku buys two skewers of seasoned pork, handing one over to Kakashi before leading him to a tree in the small training ground nearby. They sit under its shade, Shikaku keeping his eyes respectfully off Kakashi's face as he eats. He hadn't realized how hungry he was, he'd been stretching his stipend and there are days to go until the next deposit.

"The Uchiha aren't bad people," the man says finally, his gravelly voice somehow soothing, "They're just trying to protect what's theirs. This could be a net positive for you. You'll be looked after, at least materially."

Kakashi knows this, knows too that Fugaku had been among the very few who'd openly chastised the more blatant displays of harassment he and Sakumo had received. A man who places clan above village isn't very unsympathetic to Sakumo's decision to place the lives of his comrades over the mission, to think beyond a symbolic border. Shikaku had been the other, along with Maito Dai, and later Minato.

"Look, I won't lie to you kid. Politics can't be avoided entirely."

"I'm a pawn no matter what," he says, understanding. He'd known that for years. The Uchiha holding the reins doesn't make much of a difference to him, in the grand scheme of things.

Shikaku slings an arm around his shoulders and despite everything it gets Kakashi to smile behind his mask, if only slightly.

"You're smart. I trust you to know when you need help. So, if you

need anything, if it gets too much, you know where to find me. I mean that, Kakashi.”

He does end up finding a training field, after that, and spends the next three hours trying to tire himself out enough for a night without nightmares. It's usually a futile exercise but he has to train anyway so no harm in trying. He trains until his arms tingle with the energy of lightning, little flares sparking down their length when he finally stops.

He's leaning against a tree to catch his breath, mask down around his face as he wipes the sweat off when a voice sounds from a distance.

“Not bad.”

He tugs the mask up again as the man approaches, long strides and a frown on his face. Uchiha Fugaku isn't the softest of men but Kakashi has seen him hold his child, has seen the smile his wife is privy to, and the pride he has for his clan. He's not *all* edges, and he hasn't been as caustic as Kakashi had expected him to be, he will give him that.

“You'll need to train the eye. It's hard enough for an Uchiha, for someone not born of our blood I can't be sure what the effects of it's misuse will be.”

Kakashi isn't opposed to this, he does want to honour Obito's wish and it would be a waste to get himself killed too soon and especially if the reason is because he is careless with his gift.

“Who'll you have train me, sir? Pretty sure the clan would be happy with my head on a pike, forgive my bluntness.”



Fugaku sighs, a look on his face Kakashi can't decipher but he knows it isn't angry.

"It was my decision to let you keep the eye. I will train you."

\* \* \*

Fugaku and Mikoto's child is born at the peak of summer, befitting a clan that breathes fire. A boy, already known for his thicket of black hair, long lashes, and big eyes set in a cherubic face.

Gai suggests Kakashi should send a gift.

Kakashi decides the best gift is staying out of the kid's way for as long as he possibly can.

That year, Rin dies.

Then, the nine-tails attacks and Minato and Kushina do too.

He stays out of everyone's way for a long while after that.

\* \* \*

Kakashi spends the next decade limiting his interactions with the Uchiha to his training sessions with Fugaku. The elder man is a tough instructor, but he'd allowed Kakashi exactly three days after Minato and Kushina's deaths before he dragged him out to let his grief out on

a training ground before pushing him back to his house where Mikoto had been waiting with dinner and several bags of packed meals for him to take home.

Every so often Shikaku will haul him off for a snack or dinner and ask him roundabout questions that Kakashi thinks are unnecessary because he knows what the other man is doing and Kakashi can handle himself just fine. Much to the Uchiha clan's chagrin, he's gained a nickname bearing their kekkei-genkai's moniker and he's the deadliest weapon Konoha has seen since Minato. Still, Shikaku has a soft spot for him and even if he doesn't need it, Kakashi isn't opposed to spending time with him, this man who had known and respected the two most important men in his own life, both lost to him now.

He spends all his time outside that taking every mission he can get his hands on, the higher the rank and the less others want it, the better. By the time he's nearly twenty he's developed a whole new reputation that isn't *friend-killer* but he can't decide if it's an improvement. He's not exactly better liked, which is fine by him, though the Uchiha don't seem to know whether to hate him marginally less that he's not an embarrassment to them, or more given he can wield the eye better than most clansmen.

Fugaku is the only one he speaks to, really. He can see the frown deepen on the older man's face sometimes when he informs him he will be away again, for a week, a month, a few months sometimes. Missions he can't speak of, though word will get out eventually thanks to his unwanted infamy. He can't imagine what the elder man is displeased about. Either Kakashi will become a shinobi worthy of taking his son's hand, as unwilling as either of them may be, or he will die before it happens, freeing them all of the obligation.

A win-win, if Kakashi has ever seen one.

Some years later though, things change. He's made captain of his own ANBU team and recklessly running into danger no longer becomes an

option. Shisui and then Itachi are placed on Team Ro under his care with Tenzo, who he'd helped escape ROOT. He's beginning to think the Uchiha are just out for a way to get a free babysitter for all these kids by somehow latching them to him until he sees them fight. He'd heard the rumours of course and had to keep tabs on other powerful shinobi, but seeing it in action is a different thing entirely. His training sessions with Fugaku had slowed some time ago, after he'd mastered most of what he could with a teacher and he'd had little interaction with other Uchiha. Itachi is all of thirteen, sharp-eyed and lithe, and Shisui a bright and brash sixteen when they first become his charges. He'd often been the youngest in the room before that and it's odd to have people to care for as a senior and not just as a superior. He dotes on them, his version of it anyway, which mostly includes showing them the Hatake style of wielding a tanto, sharing his tracking secrets, cooking and taking first watch during overnight missions.

Shisui eventually invites him and Tenzo to train with them, eventually leading to shared meals and nights spent by campfire in the woods just to get away from work and the village, the clan, and all its pressures. He finds something like family in Team Ro's midst. He doesn't know what to feel about it. Tenzo eventually leaves ANBU to become a sensei, something he'd been wanting for years and Kakashi had been happy to write him a recommendation for.

They lay out under the stars the night before the academy graduation, minus Tenzo who has to greet his new team early the next day. Shisui has somehow procured two bottles of very old, very expensive Uchiha-made wine they're finishing between them. Itachi had sipped at the bottle delicately, the seventeen-year old scrunching his nose at the dry taste before handing the bottle back to a grinning Shisui in favour of the dango he'd brought. Kakashi's head feels cottony and warm, the stars seeming to dance slightly as he stares at them on his back. Team Ro are on a mandated two week's leave after a long two-month mission. Kakashi had been dragged out to an onsen by his charges earlier in the day and he feels loose-limbed and relaxed as it is, nevermind the thought of doing nothing but reading the latest volume of his favourite series for the next twenty-four hours.

“Captain,” Itachi starts before Kakashi cuts him off.

“What did I say?” he counters, voice a slow drawl in the face of his inebriation.

“Sorry. Senpai then. You should know, Sasuke made genin. Mother and Father will tell him soon.”

He’s either too drunk or not drunk enough for this, but they are out of wine.

“I see.”

Shisui slaps his shoulder from his other side, face set in a grin when Kakashi peers over to glare at him.

“Sasuke’s a little shit. But he’s mad cute, probably going to grow into a model like this one here,” he kicks out at Itachi as he says this, kicking Kakashi in the process, “very popular with the academy crowd and honestly even some of the graduates.”

“Great. So I get to add ‘old creep that took local heartthrob off the market’ to my long list of monikers.”

Shisui snorts and even Itachi laughs a little.

“Sasuke’s not very receptive to his admirers. Maybe he’ll be more accepting of you than you think.”

“What? Kami, I hope not,” he groans, “I’m betting on him throwing a tantrum big enough for your parents to end this thing. You can’t be okay with this, Itachi?”

The youngest of them shrugs.

“I might have been more opposed if I didn’t know you so well. If it has to be this way, you’re not the worst guy.”

“My heart warms at that ringing endorsement, but the fact remains that I don’t want this and I bet he won’t either.”

Itachi and Shisui share a look before they turn to him and Kakashi immediately feels guilty. He isn’t ignorant to the air between them, nor of the fact that Itachi too is betrothed to an Uchiha girl.

Shisui pats his shoulder and Itachi hands him a stick of grilled meat in consolation.

“Welcome to the clan, Hatake.”

\* \* \*

Tenzo is listing off the names of his new students when they catch up at dinner the next day when Kakashi’s head flies up at once in particular.

“Sasuke? Itachi’s younger brother?”

Tenzo nods, “You know him well?”

Kakashi shakes his head. It’s not a lie exactly, he doesn’t *know* Sasuke, not as a person. He hasn’t ever met him and makes it a point not to be near the compound when he can help it though he’s seen the boy around the village usually from behind his ANBU mask. Besides, telling Tenzo he is engaged to his newly acquired teenage student requires more explanation than Kakashi has the energy to provide at the moment.

Later that week, he sees Tenzo with his genin team from a distance and he watches with a fond smile at the smile on his friend’s own face. He’d be a good teacher, Kakashi knows; patient but stern and with so much care to give.

There is a hyperactive blonde boy animatedly speaking, arms gesticulating wildly and nearly whacking his teammates in the head. Minato’s boy Naruto, he recognizes; as rambunctious as ever. A wise choice to have the jinchuriki under Tenzo’s watch, he thinks with some bitterness recalling the strict orders he’d been under to remain out of his sensei’s child’s life. Kakashi still feels the poignant sting of guilt seeing him. Maybe now that he is Tenzo’s student he’d have a chance to correct that, too. Though that might mean being around Sasuke more and he’s determined to keep his distance there, for both their sakes.

He can see the gaggle of people around the young Uchiha when Tenzo leaves them for the day, boys and girls alike vying for his attention while he ignores them all to spend his lunch with Naruto. It gives Kakashi some hope, because there is no way a good looking and popular kid like that is going to be content being forced into a marriage with *him*. He watches as the boy’s cheeks flush a soft pink when yet another admirer attempts to pass him a note of some sort, the blonde boy crowing at yet another confession and nudging his

friend in the ribs.

Sasuke accepts the card with a small smile then and the girl walks away to a group of squealing peers.

Yes, this whole thing might implode on itself, without Kakashi having to lift a finger.

# Sasuke

## Chapter Notes

Updating this too as I may not be able to update for a bit with things getting busy for me for the next little while. So here we have Sasuke~

See the end of the chapter for more [notes](#)

Sasuke thinks he reacts very well, all things considered, to the news that he's been engaged his whole life to a man he's never even met. He doesn't actually react much at all, under Itachi's careful gaze and his parent's nearly apologetic glances. It's not the most shocking thing, really, especially for the children of clan heads. Itachi's already engaged and Sasuke had been expecting something similar would happen. He just hadn't realized it already had, and so long ago. He won't have to think about it, if he doesn't want to, for another few years.

He'd had one request, his intended's name.

His parents had seemed hesitant before his father sighed and uttered six syllables that would come to carve themselves into his heart.

*Hatake Kakashi.*

He'd nodded, thanked them and then went off to finish the scroll he'd been reading before dinner. The words aren't sinking in, because of course he is thinking about it. His teeth worry his bottom lip.

*Ha-ta-ke Ka-ka-shi.*

A name he knows, most people in the Hidden Leaf and beyond know



it, after all. He'd never met the man of course, much less seen him around. He knows the other shinobi is strong. Highly ranked and skilled. He likes that. He's heard he's reserved, mysterious, not prone to being ostentatious. He thinks he might like that too, far from one to seek public attention no matter how much it might find him.

He thinks of the name as he does his evening stretches and meditations, a habit Itachi forced on him, and as he washes up before bed. He ponders the ways it sounds, even sounds it out loud a few times as he wiggles his toes in the water, feeling it cool around him as he sits there pondering a future that seems entirely too far away and whispers of a name he's never said before dance across its tepid surface.

*Ka-ka-shi.*

He heads to bed with a clearer head. At the very least, they could likely build a friendship, train together, be comrades. The thought of the other things he knows are expected in marriage causes a flush to rise to his face. He's not completely naïve. He knows such things are possible between men, he isn't completely ignorant to it, though the mechanics aren't completely clear to him yet. No matter, it's not a problem for him to deal with today and not for some time yet. Well, his parents hadn't said he couldn't have other relationships in the meantime but something about it still feels disloyal to him and he hasn't met anyone he'd wanted to look twice at yet, anyway.

The next day at training, he sits beside Yamato as Naruto and Sakura run off to get them all lunch. He'd turned down Sakura's cloying offer to go together and had seriously pondered pulling out the *I'm engaged* card to get out of it, instead of his usual polite deflection. His mother had raised him to be nice but the message never seemed to get through to his pink-haired team mate. Still, using Kakashi as a get out of jail free card had felt inconsiderate when he hadn't even met the man and could infer he probably wouldn't want the news of their betrothal out in the general public just yet.

He wants to tell *someone* but neither Naruto or Ino are the best secret-keepers despite being his closest friends and besides that he's sure Naruto will never let him hear the end of it if he knows.

"Yamato-sensei, can I ask you something?" when the older man nods, still sharpening his kunai on a whetstone, he continues, "Do you know Hatake Kakashi?"

"Kakashi-senpai?" Yamato actually pauses at this, setting down the weapon and stone, "As it happens yes, quite well. We've worked together...why?"

Sasuke had been told only the clan elders and council heads know of the engagement, formally. He isn't sure if Kakashi would have told his own friends but it doesn't seem likely and it's apparent Yamato isn't aware.

"Just, I heard some people talking...he has lightning nature too, right? And a Sharingan, so..."

"He's probably not keen on tutoring," Yamato says then apologetically and Sasuke tenses but his sensei continues with a grin, "But I'm sure I could ask if he could do some targeted training with you sometime, perks of being my student."

It's an appealing offer and he wants to take it, but he doesn't feel right pressuring the elder this way. Surely, if he wants to see Sasuke, he would make the arrangements.

"Oh, no- I mean, thanks but not...not now. Maybe some other time, when I've mastered the basics more. I wouldn't want to waste his time."

“If you’re sure.”

He turns the idea over in his head for a few weeks before deciding to ask his parents instead. He’s always been a curious kid and the fact that he can’t even see his future husband or might walk past him in the village without ever knowing frustrates him. He hasn’t even seen a *picture* of the man, not shocking given most prominent shinobi didn’t exactly line up for cameras.

“Can I meet him?”

His mother shares a look with his father then before turning back to him. They’re sitting down to dinner, Itachi away on a mission. Now that he’s in ANBU he is gone more often than not.

“You want to?” she asks neutrally.

“Seems logical.”

Fugaku sighs.

“You’re in very different stages of life right now Sasuke. Kakashi doesn’t want to be any kind of influence on you when you’re still... figuring yourself out, as it were. And you’ve only just made genin, it’s not a time to be distracted.”

He is about to protest when his mother cuts in.

“Sweetheart, he also...well he has a difficult job. More dangerous than most and you can imagine the sorts of missions he’s assigned. We don’t think, any of us, that it would be good for you to, well...”

He comes to the realization as she trails off.

As a young boy he’d come home with injured baby birds cupped between his palms, stray cats tucked under his arm, and lost puppies hidden under his shirts. Every time he’d had to say goodbye to one them, he’d tear up and sequestered himself away lest he be seen crying.

“You don’t want me to get attached if...” the words *he dies* turn to ashes in his mouth, “things don’t work out.”

Mikoto gives him a sad smile, “Nothing is guaranteed, worst case included. Three years will fly by, Sasuke.”

He frowns down at the dinner table and his half-eaten plate. He can’t argue with any of it, even if he still wants differently.

“Alright, I get it. Just thought I should know the guy.”

Fugaku grips his shoulder, “You focus on your training and your missions, Sasuke. All in time.”

\* \* \*

He’s fifteen when two things happen that he’s pretty sure doom him.

First, he meets Hatake Kakashi in the flesh for the first time. It's not planned, in fact it's the exact opposite.

It was supposed to be a standard B-rank mission gathering intelligence for an ANBU team. He'd been in a cell supplementing Ino, Shikamaru, and Choji's team as they'd needed the Sharingan. They're all chuunins now and had been trusted to handle it, and they would have, if the targets hadn't hired two A-rank missing-nin to intercept them. Sasuke is the most battle-tested of them, the most equipped for heavy combat alongside Choji. They'd fought and won but it left them both injured, Sasuke worse for wear and down to the weakest flame of chakra. Shikamaru had sped ahead to get back-up and he moves slowly, supported by Ino as Choji manages to walk beside them.

"Maybe we should camp and wait," he breathes, arm pressed tight to his side where the stab wound Ino had healed is.

"No, we can't risk wasting time," she says, voice strained with exhaustion and worry alike, they'd grown up playing in each other's clan compounds and her eyes are wet as she forcefully tugs him along, "We need to try...that stitch won't hold, my medical skills aren't very advanced yet. Come on, Uchiha, I know you can do it."

It's another twenty minutes of struggle before help finally arrives.

Four ANBU land in front of him, all with cloaks on and hoods up so their hair is covered, chakra masked as is standard when outside the village. He's surprised at their presence, they don't usually send ANBU to pick up injured chuunin.

The tallest of them strides forward towards him and Ino.

“Get him on my back.”

“I’m fine-”

“Don’t argue,” and his voice is so authoritative that for once Sasuke doesn’t, “On my back, tie his hands so he doesn’t fall off.”

He groans as he’s jostled onto the ANBU’s broad back, muscled arms secured under his thighs as Ino gently ties his wrists together in front of the ANBU’s neck.

“Sorry,” the man says when he hisses as he’s moved, voice a smooth tone, “How did you manage this, kid?”

One of the other ANBU is fluttering nearby, looking tense and that’s when Sasuke blinks into focus, recognizing the design on the mask.

“It-”

“ANBU-san,” the man holding him cuts him off.

“Of course,” he murmurs, a playful grin appearing on his face, “I’m okay, ANBU-nii-san.”

The man holding him lets out a soft huff-like laugh.

The other ANBU nods stiffly, reaching out to touch his hair gently in the only gesture he can give now, looking to where two others are

securing Choji between them.

“Let’s go.”

The ANBU carrying him seems the most senior, voice older sounding and they’d called him Captain. Sasuke wonders who it is, cataloguing the smell of him, something sharp like the sweetest notes of the forest beneath the usual sweat and musk. The combination isn’t at all unpleasant to him and he finds his face tucking into the neck subconsciously in his exhaustion.

The last thing he hears as he nods off the low rumble of a soothing voice.

“Rest now, I’ve got you.”

\* \* \*

His brother had shown up in his hospital room, ANBU fatigues shed somewhere soon after his surgery, stroking his hair as he fell in and out of consciousness before they finally sedated him for some much needed sleep. Even his father partakes in some rare coddling, never having seen him so injured after a mission, sitting by him when he’s off from work and helping him with his assigned physiotherapy. He spends a week in the hospital before he’s discharged home for them to fuss over.

The first morning he wakes in his own bedroom after being sent back home, there is a potted plant on his open windowsill. His mother is folding his clothes when he wakes and catches him staring at it.

“Itachi’s team picked you up, right? His captain dropped by. Wanted to see how you were and dropped that off.”

She has a funny look on her face but Sasuke doesn’t read into it.

“Azaleas are my favourite...”

“Itachi must have told him.”

He smiles softly at the colourful flowers. He isn’t much of a green thumb but growing up with Ino had meant sitting through lectures on flowers during breaks at the academy and summers in the Yamananka’s shop cutting stems in the back room between lunches at Ichiraku’s and evenings by the Naka river, trying to wrangle his two blonde friends lest they be late for dinner. Ino had visited him too, and her brows had furrowed over her teal eyes as she’d looked at the flowers.

“What?”

“Nothing, tomato-head,” she’d said, shaking her head and patting his arm, her worry displayed in the soft affection she usually held in reserve, “Just keep that plant alive, for once.”

A few days later Itachi is home again, stumbling into the bathroom to shower off his most recent mission. Sasuke is still at home and on leave for another two weeks and he steps out onto the veranda just as Itachi walks in, patting his shoulder and ruffling his hair as he does. He catches sight of a figure walking away, tall and broad and familiar in gait but this time Sasuke can see the tall locks of silver hair on his head, the cloak missing.



“ANBU-san, wait!”

He runs, but he's still not at full capacity and he stumbles as he nears the man, who'd stopped and turned around. His hand shoots out to grab the man's guarded wrist, his other arm coming out to steady Sasuke. He'd forgotten his feet are bare on the dusty earth below, and he shivers slightly, his body not as warm as it usually runs. He should have thrown a robe on but he hadn't planned to run out of the house in his sleep clothes.

He looks up, the ANBU tilting his head in question.

“Sorry. I just wanted to thank you,” he squirms slightly under the empty gaze that is the mask, tilting his head back to look up at him. He's not short among his peers but the ANBU is at least a whole head taller than he is and much broader. He must be a few years older than Itachi, too, though his brother has always been lithe. “So...thank you. For the plant, too.”

“No need,” that same low voice says, “It's good you're well.”

He feels a strange tightness in his belly as large hands fall away from him. Now that he's not bleeding out he can appreciate the man's figure, on display in his fitted fatigues, corded arms bare and broad chest armored by his vest. He remembers the warmth of that body between his thighs, the feel of him, the *scent* -

“Are you okay, Sasuke?”

He jolts out of his mind at the sound of his name. He doesn't think it's ever sounded so good and *kami* when did his brain turn into this wanton thing he can't control-

The ANBU is still looking at him and though he can't see the concern on his face he can sense its presence in his careful stance. Probably wondering if he has a head injury they'd missed.

"I'm fine. I just must be tired..."

"You should head back inside. Take advantage of your time off. That was pretty impressive work, I read the mission brief."

"Yeah?" he perks up at the praise, "Thanks. The sheen is kind of dulled when you need to be carried back home."

"No shame in needing help," the ANBU gestures back to the house, more gently, "Go on back, or I'll have to carry you across the yard back to bed when your energy gives out and that is slightly more embarrassing."

*Is that a promise, ANBU-san ?* He doesn't ask, holding the quip behind his teeth.

He grins a little instead, nodding and bows once before he does head back.

That night he lies awake for a time, thinking of a gloved hand, warm and splayed across his belly and a comfortably large frame behind him and he wonders if it's wrong of him to hope his future husband can measure up.

Naruto visits him one day when the rest of his family is away. He comes bearing gifts of cup ramen, all the gossip Sasuke has missed, and something he promises to show Sasuke later and when he does Sasuke doesn't know why he even wondered in the first place what his surprise would be.

Naruto got his hands on a stack of *adult entertainment* as he'd called it, sniffing indignantly when Sasuke countered with a blunt *So, porn?*

"Why would you bring me this?" he asks as the blonde sits in front of the VCR in his room, sifting through unmarked tapes with only cheesy and vague titles taped onto their spines. He wrinkles his nose wondering where exactly Naruto had found these.

"Shouldn't we watch? You know, to know how it goes. Besides, pictures are boring."

"I know how it goes, idiot, and anyway why would I watch it with you?"

"Oh, you want some *alone time* with the tapes then? I could always leave some here if you like, ya know. And yeah right. You haven't let a girl near you since Ino planted one on you when we were five!"

Naruto isn't wrong about that but he resists the urge to point out it isn't impossible to be a virgin and still know how sex worked, at least mechanically. It's not like he's prudish, he'd looked as much as any other when Kiba had snuck nudie mags out of a store, but they didn't exactly have the same taste he'd realized. He'd been more interested in the stash he'd found in Shisui's room one day a year ago, when he'd been snooping out of boredom as he spent the night there when his parents had been away. He hadn't realized the older Uchiha's tastes

were quite so refined. Shisui was barely housebroken as far as he was concerned, but the nude figures had been much more appealing than the oiled up images in neon swimwear that his classmates giggled at.

There were a lot more men, too, and *with* other men; something Sasuke had become aware he was a lot more partial to.

“Oh for fuck’s sake, fine put it on. You’re a freak by the way.”

Naruto puts in the first one, already giggling and Sasuke rolls his eyes. The blonde scampers into bed with him and Sasuke wonders what the etiquette is here but there isn’t much time to establish any ground rules before the dark room is lit up with light from the TV and the sounds of pleasure from the speakers.

“Oh, well I did grab a variety, huh,” Naruto tilts his head as two naked men suddenly fill the small screen. They’re alone in the house but Naruto quickly lowers the volume anyway, the groans and gasps somehow still managing to sound loud.

“You idiot,” Sasuke mumbles, but it’s without heat. He’s distracted, a twist in his belly and blood rushing everywhere but his heart it seems.

Taut muscles, the flat planes of a lean torso, low grunts. Suddenly the boyish smell of Naruto beside him - knee brushing his own and skin just as heated - is too much. He shifts away. They watch in complete silence for a few minutes. He can’t tell if he’s the only one so affected by the lewd images, or if Naruto is so inclined as well. He’s only really known the blonde to lust after girls, thus far.

“Wow,” Naruto is tilting his head the other way like a puppy, watching the action on the screen with a furrowed brow, “I didn’t actually think anything could go back up that way.”

Sasuke is barely listening to his friend. The images seem to shift in front of him, the dominant figure suddenly warping becoming leaner, silver hair growing from his head and a white and red mask firmly in place. It's no surprise to see himself beneath the man when his gaze wanders and he gasps just as the smaller man on screen does, back arching in release.

“Well, now you know. Do you want ramen?” he asks standing up abruptly and quickly walking away before Naruto can see the tent he's sporting, “What am I saying of course you do.”

“Hey come on, Sas, it's just getting good...fuck- you know I didn't think I'd find a guy cute but maybe I was wrong...”

“Whatever, don't do anything gross on my bed.”

He steps away cursing the fact that he won't be alone tonight.

\* \* \*

It's a few weeks after he turns sixteen that he actually meets Kakashi, as *Kakashi* , in his home.

His parents had set up dinner, prior to the actual engagement ceremony.

He steps out of the shower and scrubs at his face with something Ino had gotten him and brushes his hair, arranging its voluminous locks as best as he can. He pulls on one of his nicer maroon turtle necks, the

Uchiha fan stamped subtly on the collar, tucking it into his black slacks. He stares at himself in the mirror, critical. He's always been told he was handsome, beautiful, even, but perhaps one can ever feel quite ready to meet the person they will marry. He's just gotten back from a specialized training session and he feels rushed, wishing he has more time to get into the right headspace.

When he walks into the main room, the man is already there and he pauses by the door, in shock.

He knows that back, that shock of silver hair, those *hands* - now curled around a wine glass as opposed to the hilt of a tanto. The man turns around and to Sasuke's frustration his face remains mostly hidden by a face mask that goes up to the bridge of his nose, though his gaze is now clearly visible even if it comes from only one eye.

He feels held in place by it, despite its neutral expression.

He stills as the older man stands and walks towards him, stopping a few paces away and bowing slightly as his waist. He feels flustered with it, Hatake Kakashi is not someone who should ever have to bow to a shinobi like him, but when he catches his mother's eyes he realizes they are not a recently made jonin and superior here. Here, he is the second-born of one of the most powerful clans in the village and Kakashi is his lower-born, husband-to-be.

"Sasuke, it is an honour to meet you. Officially."

The voice is another blow to his composure but he fights through it.

"The pleasure is mine."

He spends most of dinner politely answering whatever questions come his way, asking his own generic ones in turn. He hadn't been raised by heathens and he knows how to deftly handle a social call no matter how much his mind is reeling.

Hatake Kakashi is ANBU-san.

He is marrying Hatake Kakashi.

He is marrying *ANBU-san* who had accompanied him many a night in his dreams and waking fantasies, doing things they might actually now *do* in the not so distant future-

"Sasuke?"

He blinks at his mother's concerned face.

"I asked if you wanted dessert, sweetheart."

"Oh, no thanks."

"He's not one for sweets," his mother tells Kakashi as she stands.

"Sasuke isn't very fussy," his father adds, and he frowns slightly at this line of discussion, wanting to hear more about Kakashi and not his parents talking about him like they had during parent days at the academy.

“Oh, I’m sure he’s a delight,” Kakashi says, “I do fear a life of extended missions and solo living will have made me a wanting house mate, however.”

“Nonsense, I’m sure you’re perfectly capable of keeping a lovely home. I’ve heard you’re quite the chef and quite tidy. Sasuke here never took to cooking, it’s more Itachi’s wheelhouse but I’ve been teaching him. I daresay he has an eye for flower arrangements though, thanks to the Yamanaka’s girl dragging him off to the fields all through their childhood.”

Fugaku ruffles his hair when he pouts and reddens slightly at his mother’s teasing.

“You ought to spar. Sasuke is impressive with a tachi but he hasn’t quite gotten a hand of the ideal technique for a tanto, yet, have you?”

He peeks at Kakashi through his lashes.

“No, father. I would not mind some instruction in close combat.”

Kakashi’s hand pauses ever so slightly where it had been stirring his after-dinner coffee, eyes calculating as he meets Sasuke’s gaze completely impassively. Sasuke smiles a little, enough to make the dimple he knows most coo at appear on his cheek.

“Then it’s settled,” Fukagu continues, seemingly oblivious to this beat of tension, “There is no better way to get to know another shinobi.”

After dessert he helps his mother clear the table and his father takes Kakashi over to his office as they tidy up. His mother shoos him off



soon enough and he wanders to where they'd headed. Hearing their voices, he pauses in the hallway, masking his chakra signature and funneling some to his ears to hear better, curious at the relationship between his father and Kakashi.

Kakashi's voice is smooth, mellow but commanding attention nonetheless.

"You have been kind. More than I expected, to be frank."

His father sounds gruff in response, "You think I wished you a miserable life? No. And more importantly, neither do I wish one for my son. Your lives will be tied together, now."

"Despite all expectations," Kakashi answers wryly.

"More like your best attempts. As for Sasuke...he's a gentle boy," he hears his father say fondly, and it makes something well up in his eyes, "I have been harsh in moments because I feared it would eventually wound him...and I was not sure what sort of husband you might be."

He grips the doorframe he's near, hearing that, suddenly feeling affection for the strict man that had raised him.

"But I will say now that as kind as he is, he will not tolerate any nonsense from you and I daresay you are in need of such."

He stills when he sees Kakashi's head turn slightly towards where he's hidden before he answers.

“Maybe you’re right about that.”

\* \* \*

Now that their engagement is established, the date set and the introductions made, Sasuke happens to see Kakashi around the village more often and he wonders if the elder had gone out of his way to avoid him all those years before. He finally plucks up the courage to approach him from across the market one day, as the elder pauses by a quiet side street after leaving a bookstore.

“Sasuke,” the man greets cordially, “What can I do for you?”

Not one for small talk then.

“Hi,” he feels silly now, but forges on, “I was just thinking with the ceremony being soon, well...I thought we could have dinner, or train together like my father suggested, or-”

“Look, Sasuke...I’ll be blunt,” Kakashi cuts in, “I don’t expect anything from you. Even if you want to sate your needs elsewhere I won’t stop you, though I imagine it would be best for all parties involved to be discreet.”

Sasuke stares at him, floored, feeling his chest tighten at the cold reception.

“What? You-” he cuts himself off, scoffing as anger catches up with the hurt, “Was that you giving me your blessing to fuck around?”

“You don’t need my blessing,” the man says, shrugging looking like he’s discussing a grocery list and not their shared future, “We’ll be married, Sasuke. I’m sure your parents have explained why. But this is not a *marriage* .”

His feelings about that must show on his face because the stern set of Kakashi’s brow smoothes out then and his tone gentles.

“I’m not trying to be cruel. You should know that whatever it is you want from me, I can’t give you.”

“What is it you think I want?” he asks through gritted teeth.

“I don’t know. But...a dog on a leash. That’s what the clan wants, and you’re my handler, Sasuke. Excuse me for not seeing the appeal. I’m not a good match for *anyone* , I’m not even a good man, or even a particularly nice one. I’m here because I’m in possession of something that rightfully belongs to your clan and you’re here because of an unfortunate accident of birth.”

He tries not to react as his tentative imaginings of what his married life might be light come crumbling down in his mind. How stupid of him. How naïve, how childish, he’d been no better than any of the fanclub that used to follow *him* around, knowing nothing of him at all but what they’d conjured up.

Kakashi sighs, looking down before he meets Sasuke’s eyes again and delivers his parting words.

“For what it’s worth, I am sorry about this.”

“How could you not tell us this?!”

Ino’s screech is loud enough to get everyone at the bar to stop and stare until Sasuke glares at them until they look away.

“ *That’s* why.”

He’d held onto his wounds until a week later, out with his friends during a couple of days off of theirs that aligned. The entire story comes tumbling out of him after a few drinks. He’d planned to tell them today anyway, given the engagement ceremony was only a couple of weeks away now, but he’d been imagining a less morose atmosphere.

“Fuck,” Ino slams down her glass, “I knew it was him, ANBU-san!”

He’d revealed his crush on the faceless figure to them one night months earlier, feeling bad he’d had nothing juicy to share during a game of two truths and a lie out by the river.

“What, how?” Naruto asks, poking at the fried chicken Sasuke usually gorged on with abandon. He doesn’t have much of an appetite lately.

She has the grace to look sheepish.

“Azaleas...?”

That catches his attention.

“Wait, you knew since then? Ino!”

“It’s not like I really knew! I didn’t even know you were engaged until, oh, two seconds ago? Besides people buy a lot of flowers for the injured in this village, go figure, and he’s a repeat customer. I didn’t think it was likely *the* Hatake Kakashi was buying your sorry ass flowers.”

He shrugs, “Not like it matters. We’re only going to be married on paper. According to him.”

“Fuck him!” Ino says with conviction, sliding another cup of sake his way before signaling a server for another bottle.

Naruto snorts from his side, “I think Sasuke’s trying.”

Sasuke glares at that, but he’s sure the effect is dulled by the glaze he can practically see as a film in his eyes. How ironic that after spending years having so many throw themselves at him, it would be his own husband to be the one to deny him. The more he thinks about it, the more annoyed his drunk brain gets. He knows he’s tempting. He knows he’s sought after. In two years he’ll only be more so. *Who does Hatake Kakashi think he is?*

“I mean, it’s gotta be weird for him right? Yamato-sensei only has good things to say about him and you said Itachi and Shisui actually like the guy...” Naruto trails off, seeing his and Ino’s glares.

“Listen,” she says, as if Naruto hadn’t spoken, “You’re Uchiha Sasuke, graduated top of your class, youngest special jonin since the war, a weapon’s master and owner of the most beautiful face in Konoha besides my own...he should be *begging* at your feet.”

She tugs Naruto in by the shoulder, grinning at him sharply the way she does when she has a plan and for once Sasuke isn’t sure what side of it he should be on.

\* \* \*

*Some plan.*

Sasuke groans into Naruto’s shoulder as the blonde holds him up outside one Hatake Kakashi’s apartment, happily not far from the bar they’d been at. He can’t recall if this is part of Ino’s plan but either way he assumes Kakashi has a bed or a couch or even a floor he could lie down on...

“So you let him get completely sloshed and decided to come here?” an unimpressed voice says and Sasuke doesn’t have the guts to look up and meet the man’s face.

“Well, we just heard the news - congrats by the way! - and yeah, kind of not keen on dragging Sasuke all the way to my place and the compound is even further so, here you go.”

He does peek out from under Naruto’s arm at that and nearly swallows his tongue at the sight of Kakashi leaning against his door frame, arms crossed and biceps looking especially well built in a wide-armed sleeveless top. He just wants to touch-

“You’re really going to leave your drunk friend with a man you don’t know?”

He feels Naruto shrug and it reminds him he wants to throw up or lie down. Or both.

“Itachi trusts you. ‘S good enough for me. Besides, Sasuke might be drunk but he still throws a mean punch.”

He hears Kakashi curse before he’s being gently jostled out of Naruto’s hold, the blonde cheerfully bidding them a good night before Kakashi kicks the door shut in his face and helps Sasuke in.

“Kami, kid, help me out here,” a deep voice murmurs, before he’s being lifted.

He whines a little and the man actually laughs a little at that, admonishing his childishness before he’s being carefully set down on what feels like a couch.

“Give me a sec to get the room ready.”

He mumbles something he hopes is understandable before turning to bury his nose into the couch cushions. He must doze off for a bit, but wakes when he’s deposited in the middle of a bed and his shoes are being tugged off along with his vest and hitai-ate. A blanket is pulled up to his chin and soon after he feels the bed dip as a washcloth wipes his face down. He blinks his eyes open, watching Kakashi with some curiosity as he sighs softly and his face smoothes out at the action.

“You make a habit of this?” Kakashi asks, not unkindly.

“No,” Sasuke mumbles, curling onto his side, “Ino said...I should have some ‘fucking fun’ while I can...”

Another laugh, gentle sounding. Sasuke decides he rather likes it.

“Inoichi’s kid? What, she think I’ll keep you barefoot and chained to my kitchen or something?”

Sasuke reaches out to curl his hand into the older man’s shirt in a way that is too innocent for the words that come out of his mouth next.

“She said if I’m lucky enough it wouldn’t be to the kitchen.”

The pause after that is weighted as he becomes very conscious of the fact that he’s in Kakashi’s bed.

“Okay,” Kakashi stands, ignoring the mournful sound he lets out at that, “Time for you to sleep this off. I’ll send Itachi a message that you’re here.”

He pouts.

“You’re mean.”

“So I’ve been told. As I’ve told you.”



The words are blunt but the elder's actions don't match up. Kakashi's hand is soothing where it runs through the strands of his hair, sending pleasant shivers through him.

"I just...want you to like me," he mumbles into the pillow he latches onto instead, "Is that wrong?"

A sigh.

"I like you just fine, Sasuke."

"Just not enough to kiss me."

"Oh? I thought only dinner or sparring were on the table," said teasingly.

"Everything's on the table, that's what being married means."

There is a longer pause at this and Sasuke wonders what he's said wrong now, his mind still hazy and sleep feeling closer with each passing minute.

"That's not what it has to mean, Sasuke. Not if you don't want it to. Like I said-"

"I heard you loud and clear," he turns away then, his back to the man as he feels frustration prick at him, "How fucking romantic you made

it all sound...”

He feels the bed dip again and a hand is on his back, rubbing soothingly up and down.

“If romance is what you are after, I’m very much the wrong tree to bark at.”

“I wonder about that, ANBU-san. Or do you always ask for azaleas at the flower shop?”

A shift, and another beat of silence before he feels Kakashi move away again and he sits up abruptly, ignoring the swimming in his head. Sasuke’s hand shoots out, latching onto one of Kakashi’s wrists. He peers up, meeting the elder’s eyes for the first time that night, focusing on each word so he can speak clearly. If Kakashi dismisses everything else he’s said tonight, he doesn’t want this to be part of it.

“I don’t want to be your handler. You’re going to be my *husband* , and I intend to think of you as such. I just want to know who you are...I don’t want to go home to a stranger. Can you at least give me that?”

He thinks he hears an answer as he’s guided back down to the pillow and to sleep, footsteps fading out of the room in its wake.

“I’ll try.”

The engagement dinner had started formally, with the standard speeches and a commitment ceremony that mainly involved Sasuke staring at his hands in Kakashi's, wrapped in red silk and nearly missing his cue to speak. They hadn't really spoken since he snuck out of Kakashi's window the morning after he'd gotten drunk, too embarrassed to face him until they'd had to go over the details of the ceremony with his parents. Kakashi had watched him silently throughout and where Sasuke normally would have poked the proverbial bear he found himself hesitant.

The dinner that follows the ceremony is raucous, the Uchiha are a boisterous group behind closed doors. It's easy for everyone to get distracted at these things, debates, arguments, and gossip flying around the large tables. Sasuke almost feels bad for Kakashi who is certainly not used to this level of activity or attention on him, outside of a battle. Most of the clan members are subtly watching Kakashi out of the corner of their eyes while they carry on. Sasuke is entirely unsure how the elder has managed to eat anything the entire time.

He wishes his friends were here, but this event is clan only. Itachi and Shisui are seated near Fugaku, beside Kakashi who is opposite Sasuke. Mikoto is somewhere further down, catching up with her friends. Hardly anyone is paying attention to Sasuke or the fact that he's on his third glass of wine. Maybe he is making this a habit, but only to get through the unbearable tension. Sasuke wouldn't call himself a lightweight... though Ino and Naruto sure would. Really, he's not usually much of a drinker but it is his damn engagement and he deserves to let go sometimes...

When he glances back at Kakashi again, the elder looks away just in time and he's left feeling cold.

What a thing to celebrate.

Luckily the evening is past the point of formality, devolving into various side conversations and debates, which at an Uchiha event are

always lively. Sasuke peers at Kakashi throughout dessert, in conversation with his father. He admires the cut of his face, despite most of it being hidden, his full head of thick hair and broad shoulders. He's in a deep navy kimono just as Sasuke is, the Uchiha colour proudly on display throughout the hall.

Sasuke has an idea then, some back corner of his mind thinking Ino would be proud of this one. He stretches out under the table, happily noting it isn't so wide that his foot doesn't manage to meet the other man's ankle. Kakashi pauses only slightly, but continues on, perhaps thinking it an accident. Sasuke doesn't waste time relieving him of that idea as he trails his foot up a lean leg until he feels the outline of a muscled thigh, tense. Kakashi grabs his foot, holding it at bay. When Sasuke tugs impertinently Kakashi does the same and Sasuke gasps slightly as he slides an inch down in his chair, catching his hands on its sides. He glares from across the table, but Kakashi only lets his thumb rub back and forth against the soft skin of his bare ankle in his lap, not quite an apology though Sasuke can admit he isn't deserving of one.

He doesn't care if he's being petulant. Kakashi had said he would *try*, he remembers that clear enough and he hadn't done a thing to prove his words. Sasuke shouldn't be the only one stepping forward and yet somehow he feels like the one in the wrong. Not unlike an unruly kitten, picked up by its scruff and chastised, then stroked until subdued and purring. Not in the way he'd hoped, he thinks wryly, though Kakashi's calloused hand on his foot does feel nice. The thought makes him pull experimentally again, but the elder's hand grips his ankle tight in warning, still nonchalantly carrying on a conversation with his father across the table as if nothing is happening. A thumb brushes along the arch of his foot and he squirms, feeling hot.

Kakashi finally looks at him then, brow raised. Sasuke feels blood rush to his face as he feels the elder trace something on his foot at once ticklish and indignant at the word itself.

*Behave.*

Kakashi maintains eye contact with him as he tilts his head towards Fugaku who is now speaking to someone else. Sasuke calms, realizing riling Kakashi up is only fun if it doesn't end in his father out what he's been up to - or attempted to be up to - under the table. He doesn't mind the feeling of his foot gently cradled in Kakashi's lap, and pictures spending evenings off like this, on a shared couch and not surrounded by the entire clan. He grows bored of this stalemate soon enough when Kakashi's attention again slides elsewhere, apparently quite the conversationalist. He slides his foot away and out of the grip that had loosened once he stopped resisting. He slips his shoe back on under the table and stands, stepping away to serve himself another drink. Just as he's about to pour he feels a heat behind him and a voice murmur into his ear.

"I think you've had quite enough. Walk with me."

Maybe there had been a method to Naruto's madness all those years he spent making trouble. Smirking, he turns to see Kakashi already walking away, out of the room. He follows him down the hallways of the great hall until they reach the area near the back gardens, still isolated as everyone enjoys dessert. He's tipsy enough not to react quick enough when Kakashi grabs his arm, pulling him behind a wall and holding him there, his smaller wrists caught between large hands by his sides.

Well, not that he would have tried very hard in the first place. This is more like it.

"It would be unfortunate if any of the clan walked by right now, to see you handling me like this," he says, not trying in the slightest to divest himself of the rather loose hold and in fact tilting his head closer.

"I rather think you want to be *handled*. I'll say this once," the man says, eyes narrowed less with anger and more with annoyance, "I

know you are young, and likely frustrated. But I'm not a toy to be played with, Sasuke. Clan head's heir or not you won't find your amusement with me."

*Amusement?* His playfulness turns back to anger then and he glares defiantly.

"We're to be married."

"Yes, Sasuke, I am very aware. And I told you, I'm trying but you can't-"

"Are you? You've spent our whole engagement party speaking to my father. Or mother. Or Itachi, Shisui. The only words you've said to me this entire evening have been scripted."

He shakes himself out of the grip, which had slackened at his outburst. He busies himself with smoothing down his kimono again, sighing deeply before he speaks once more this time meeting Kakashi's eyes clearly.

"I'm not a mission, and I'll be damned if I'll let you treat me like one or just...a thing to be tolerated. Because I haven't done that to you, not for a second."

He doesn't wait to see if Kakashi follows before he leaves.

## Chapter End Notes

Kakashi was expecting one thing and here Sasuke comes singing Positions like he's Ariana...

# Them - Part I

## Chapter Notes

So yes the last chapter got too long so now we have one more after this...hope no one's upset about that!

Also yeah I was stuck on what to call the concluding chapters but since I am always just like "THEM!!" about these two it seemed fitting.

See the end of the chapter for more [notes](#)

The bank of the Naka River has always been one of Sasuke's favourite spots to unwind. It's neither hidden nor out of the way but anyone who knows him usually gives him his space when he heads out there alone. That doesn't stop Shisui and Itachi from sitting a little too casually on either side of him the day after the engagement, seemingly back from training.

"Did something happen?" Itachi asks without any preamble.

"Meaning what?"

He's counting on a few more rounds of circular questioning from Itachi, but Shisui never has been one to allow him to wallow.

"Meaning Kakashi didn't have his book out once today during training, he just...stared into the distance like an Aburame. Fucking unsettling."

"*Nothing* happened, nothing is happening and nothing probably *will*," he says with bitterness, skipping another stone off the river, frowning as his hard toss causes it to sink immediately. He wonders if that is a sign.

Shisui cackles to his side and he glares.

“Aw, Sas, you’re too cute sometimes, you know?” he says, moving to pinch his cheek and Sasuke bats his hand away, only for Itachi to pinch the other one instead.

Sasuke frowns at the river, determined to ignore their knowing glances.

Itachi finally sighs.

“It’s not you, Sasuke.”

He scoffs, “Pretty sure that line is supposed to come from Kakashi.”

There is a ghost of a smile on his elder brother’s face.

“I quite agree...and you should talk to him. Just...try to understand. His position is not an easy one, not here or generally. Having no family let alone clan to speak of and being put under the thumb of another where most are no fans of yours - to put it mildly. All to honour the dying wish of a comrade.”

Sasuke is sobered by this thought. He’d thought them the same, both pushed into something not of their own choosing. He hadn’t stopped to think that they weren’t on equal footing, even in this union and never had been, no matter his personal feelings on the matter or the man.



“Well, when you put it like that...”

“Mother and father wanted to give you time to get to know each other after you became old enough, but you know he could ask for the wedding to be moved up. He could force it tomorrow, since you are of age. I mention it because there are many who would, and would try to take advantage of you in one way or another. Regardless of the rest of it, it will make him a clan member and that comes with privileges most want.”

“Especially given your obvious attraction,” Shisui adds, though this time he isn’t teasing and his expression is serious as it rarely is, “It’s a weapon most others would use, but Captain wouldn’t ever do that.”

They stand then, Itachi ruffling his hair with a fond look.

“Just...hear him out. And whatever you did or said, if there’s one thing Captain is, it’s forgiving. I wouldn’t worry about it.”

\* \* \*

Sasuke is hunting for a pair of pants days later when a knock sounds on his bedroom door.

“Yeah?”

It clicks open as he’s sifting through the hangers in his closet, he was sure he did laundry-

“Oh, sorry...”

When he turns back around at that voice he blinks, seeing Kakashi now turned away and facing the door. He's surprised, feeling exposed if only from the thighs down.

“Your mother said I could come up, and then you said-”

“It's fine,” he shrugs, it's not like he's naked and this wouldn't even register as awkward were they in the jonin locker rooms or an inn during a mission. It probably shouldn't be awkward *now* either, who but his husband-to-be should be seeing him in his underwear in his bedroom? He quickly settles on a pair of black pants and tugs them on, tucking his grey shirt into the waistband.

Kakashi is looking at the weapons hung on his wall when he turns back around, admiring his katana and the other tachi displayed there.

“What can I help you with?” he says, echoing Kakashi's earlier line. He feels foolish now, appearing so eager. Not to mention his inebriated actions from the ceremony. They hadn't spoken since then and he'd been going over Itachi and Shisui's words, wondering how to approach Kakashi. Despite the current tension being mostly his fault he thinks maybe he should take a page out of Kakashi's book and cool it.

Kakashi's hands slip into his pockets then, a gesture Sasuke almost thinks is nervous. It makes him feel satisfied and then immediately guilty for it. He frowns inwardly at the emotion, he's always been a soft touch, but it disappears as soon as Kakashi speaks.

“You have a day off right? Want to spar, maybe get breakfast?”

He fidgets and tries not to sound hopeful, “Really? Did someone put you up to this?”

He couldn’t even keep a lid on it for a minute.

“Yeah and no,” Kakashi shrugs and his stance shifts, and this time Sasuke *knows* it’s nervousness, “Believe it or not, I know when I’ve been a dick. And it’s like your father said, there’s no better way to get to know another shinobi. So, if you’ll still have me?”

He bites down the smile that comes unbidden to his face then.

“Okay.”

\* \* \*

Fugaku wasn't wrong.

Sasuke had led them to his favoured training spot, an open ground where his flame and lightning are free to scorch the earth. He knows a little bit about Kakashi’s fighting style by now too, and thinks the ground will favour his affinity for earth as well. There hadn’t been much of a delay before they’d leapt into action.

Sasuke feels like he’s learned more about Kakashi during their spar than he has in all the time since he’d learned his name. He is efficient, never making an extra move or giving anything away before he means

to. Complimented by incredible speed and power moves that contain just enough push to be necessary, there is nothing flashy in his execution. It compounds everything he's learned about the man himself, steadfast and to the point.

By the time he's pining what turns out to be a Kakashi clone to the ground, the real man behind him holding a kunai to his throat, he's sweating properly and taking in gulps of air. The heat around him lessens as the clone pops away and Kakashi steps back, letting him up.

"You're good. Not that I doubted what I'd heard."

Sasuke can't help the grin that he lets out.

"Thanks. And you're...well. You know."

Kakashi shrugs and gestures with his head to the path that leads back to the village and they begin the trek back.

"I've just had more time to refine myself and my technique."

Sasuke rolls his eyes slightly, but adds *humble* to the growing list of adjectives he's building in his head. He wonders if Kakashi has any for him yet, then thinks it's probably better if he doesn't. He's sure the list starts and ends with *troublesome*. Kakashi insists on paying for their food and it only makes Sasuke feel guiltier as they sit at a table outside near the stall.

"Look," he starts, "I'm sorry about what I did and how I acted the other day. I just...I've been frustrated, but that's not fair to you. I wasn't thinking about how this all started for you, either. I took it as a

personal rejection and because I- ...well I didn't take that well."

Kakashi sets down his utensils and Sasuke wonders if he'd wolfed down his food in the time it took Sasuke to get his speech out, eyes darting around them in embarrassment.

"We don't know each other, but you're right that I was not helping change that," Kakashi says evenly, "Let's let bygones be bygones and try again."

"I'm not opposed to this," Sasuke adds in a rush, suddenly needing to say it, "Or to you. I know you might feel differently, but...if you feel guilty or bad for *me* , it's not necessary."

There is a look on Kakashi's face then, his brows furrowed and eyes calculating.

"Why? You have a whole life ahead of you, why settle for being tied to me?"

Sasuke shrugs, struggling to find the words. He doesn't feel like revealing his crush on ANBU-san just yet, worried it sounds juvenile, so he settles for the remainder of the truth.

"If it's not you, it would just be someone else."

"Yes....," Kakashi allows, "but likely someone closer to your own age, someone... I don't know, *fun* ? Without the baggage?"

“It doesn’t bother me. And I have a feeling you can be more fun than you let on. When it suits you,” he sits up a little straighter, hands curled around the edge of the chair he’s on. Kakashi’s eyes follow the lean lines that he knows his thin, fitted sweater don’t do much to hide down to a waist he knows Kakashi’s hands would fit perfectly around. His lean legs stretch out under the table, feet crossed at the ankles between Kakashi’s own that are planted on the ground.

“Is it...do you find me lacking?”

It’s a flirtation and genuinely insecure inquiry in one.

Kakashi tilts his head back, as if contemplating him before he reaches out with a gloved hand, the bare pads of his fingers brushing against a spot on Sasuke’s cheek and coming away with a streak of dirt. He feels himself flush. So much for being seductive, but it had been silly of him to try after losing a spar - dripping with sweat and smelling of grass and earth.

“You don’t have to do all that,” Kakashi says sincerely with a soft laugh, gently tapping one of Sasuke’s shoes with his own beneath the table, “I like you best without the pretence. Dragging yourself home after saving your teammates and nearly getting the best of me in that spar. Even standing up to me the other day...there’s nothing lacking about that.”

Sasuke relaxes at this, feeling pride and seeing something like fondness in Kakashi’s expression. He thinks he might have his blush under control until the man speaks again.

“And well, you already know what you look like.”

It gets easier after that.

They're both busy and don't get to spend as much time together as Sasuke would like, but Kakashi makes a point to see him at least every other week when he's in the village to spar or share a meal. Sometimes they are joined by Shisui, Itachi or Fugaku; others by Team 7 and Yamato. He can see Kakashi start to loosen up around him and the idea of being seen with his young husband-to-be, even as whispers occasionally follow them.

When they sit under the waning evening sun after a spar one day months later, alone and trading tales from academy days as Kakashi's head falls back with a laugh at one of his quips, he feels he's won something precious.

\* \* \*

Kakashi is making breakfast when Shikaku shows up at his door unexpectedly. He'd been planning to meet Sasuke for a morning run with the ninken, something they'd started doing after he introduced him to the pack nearly a year into their courtship of sorts. It seems those plans might have to wait. He lets the older shinobi in, offering him a mug of tea as he's handed a scroll.

"Thought I'd spare you a walk to the Tower."

He reads the mission brief with a sigh, "Great timing."

"For once you sound like you don't mean that," the older man says, brow raising.

He frowns, "Sasuke's not going to take this well."

*And I was actually beginning to enjoy my life,* he doesn't say.

Shikaku nods.

"I can imagine. But he's a shinobi, he'll understand," he pats Kakashi's shoulder and he feels himself relax minutely, Shikaku always had a calming effect on him.

"This is exactly what I didn't want. For us to get...Shikaku, he just *feels* so much, you know? What is that even like? I wouldn't know anymore. A lot can happen over a mission like this."

Shikaku gives him a wry sort of smile.

"Sounds to me like you're starting to know again, whether you realize it or not."

Kakashi rolls those words over in his head as he walks to the Uchiha district, he doesn't bother to take the front door, having gotten used to tapping at Sasuke's window to wake him for morning training. Shisui had teased him for a long while after finding that out, wiggling his brows at insinuations of the need for a quick escape. He raps softly at the glass, Sasuke pulling aside his curtains and sliding the window open with a smile for him to slip through.

He listens to Sasuke's mumbling chatter, never a morning person but still more energetic than he is. He offers a hum or a nod here and there, until he blinks to see Sasuke standing in front of him, peering up at him with a frown.



“Something’s wrong.”

He’d hoped to be able to hold it in until after their run, not wanting to put a damper or awkward film over their morning. There isn’t a point now though, not with Sasuke’s face set in that stubborn way he knows means he’s not getting out of anything.

“I’ve been assigned a long term mission.”

Sasuke sets himself down on his bed, mouth turning down further in a way Kakashi wants to call cute. He’d been wanting to do that more often.

“How long?”

“Well, the estimate is eight months-”

“So more like a year. Cutting it pretty close to the wedding, you sure you’ll make it?”

Sasuke’s tone sounds somewhat wry and he steps over, settling a hand in soft, raven hair.

“I’m sorry. You know I didn’t choose this.”

“Yeah...I know. Are you going alone? Or...your whole squad? Will Itachi...?”

“Just Shisui. The rest of the team is another squad,” he runs his fingers through the strands knowing how much Sasuke enjoys the feeling, watching his breathing slow again as he calms, “We’ll watch each other’s backs. Come on, we can talk when we’ve done our laps.”

They do make their run, Sasuke loves the ninken and his expression is as unguarded as Kakashi’s ever seen it as they circle the perimeter of the village, the canines weaving in and out of their paths. They pause where the Naka River runs out of the village and into the forest, splashing their faces and taking a minute to rest.

“When do you leave?” Sasuke asks, fiddling with a blade of grass and not meeting his eyes, unusual for him.

“Two weeks. It’ll be busy until then, meetings and prep.”

Sasuke nods and doesn’t ask further questions, knowing the details will be classified anyway. When they part at the gates his face is subdued even as he offers a soft smile and Kakashi marvels at just how much can change in a year when he is filled with the urge to do anything to change it and see it brighten the way he knows it can.

\* \* \*

Shisui is chattering next to him as they walk to the centre of the village for the spring festival. They’d been lucky it fell just before they’d have to leave, one last fun night with their friends and loved ones before heading off for a long while. Kakashi adjusts his soft green yukata self-consciously. He usually doesn’t bother with traditional attire, wandering the festivals in his usual jonin blues, but now he isn’t just a lone shinobi most don’t want to associate with. He is an official affiliate of the Uchiha clan, a future in-law to the clan head’s family, and Sasuke’s betrothed. Now that the engagement has happened it is public knowledge and Kakashi has more than his own

reputation to consider. It's the least he can do for Sasuke's family to clean up enough to stand by their son's side.

He runs into Fugaku and Mikoto when they reach the performance stage, where entertainment in the form of musical numbers and jutsu exhibitions are held. Sasuke and Itachi, along with a few others of the Uchiha, are putting on a fire-jutsu display.

He watches the performance raptly, Sasuke is graceful and makes his seals with a flourish for the added effect, manipulating the flames into shapes of mythical creatures to the delight of the many children around.

"His control is immaculate, isn't it?" Fugaku murmurs beside him and Kakashi grins.

"That a self pat on the back?"

The clan head actually chuckles, "Maybe. Think I deserve one?"

"Actually, yes."

Mikoto slips her hand into Fugaku's with a smile, "You seem taken with him, Kakashi."

She laughs at his obvious embarrassment at that observation. He isn't sure what to say to that really, it seems equally dangerous to deny as to admit.

“Cut that out, that guilty face,” Fugaku admonishes, and for a second Kakashi feels like his father is back even if Fugaku is more gruff and stern than Sakumo had ever been, “I don’t know what you’ve done but Sasuke’s been on cloud nine since he met you. I can’t be anything but grateful for that, all things considered.”

“Thank you, sir.”

“Cut that out, too,” Fugaku says with a sigh, walking forward to greet his sons as they come off the stage with pats on the back and a ruffle to Sasuke’s hair that the boy scowls at to his face before he turns away with a pleased little grin.

He spots Kakashi as his parents take their leave and he jogs to where he’s clapping along with the other observers, cheeks red and slightly out of breath.

“So?”

“Stop fishing for compliments,” Kakashi answers, fixing wayward strands of Sasuke’s hair, “It was amazing, of course.”

Sasuke grins like he’d expected just that and takes his hand, easily interlocking their fingers as he drags Kakashi down past the stalls to where Team 7 and Kakashi’s friends had apparently commandeered tables. He feels himself heat at the public display of affection but when Sasuke seems to be about to let go, sensing his reaction, he holds fast. The little dimple that appears in Sasuke’s cheek at the smile he lets out makes his nervousness worth it. He sees a few people whisper behind their hands and some teasing looks sent their way, but otherwise no one pays them much mind.

It’s easy to forget his upcoming departure, listening to Naruto’s

exaggerated stories and Yamato's calm corrections, watching Gai and Asuma get into an arm wrestling match that ends with all drinks in their vicinity flying, rolling his eyes good naturedly at Shisui's teasing and sharing looks with Itachi at his and Sasuke's bickering. All while Sasuke's weight rests comfortably at his side, leaning back into Kakashi's arm acting like a makeshift backrest. Dark hair brushes his face as Sasuke turns this way and that with the conversation, a hand resting on his thigh as he leans over to grab more food for them both. Kakashi thinks they've probably never looked as much like a couple as they do now, and he realizes with a start it's not just on paper anymore and a couple is just what they are.

When the sun begins to set, Sasuke pulls him along again and Kakashi lets him without question, wondering with amusement if this is an accurate preview of what marriage will be like with him. He feels a smile tug at his face beneath his mask at this thought, as he realizes how much has changed since he'd met Sasuke. His belly is full of food and drink, not consumed alone out of need or a desperate way to escape, but with friends and from shared plates and pitchers. His hand is warm in another's and he's at a festival of all things, something he'd generally avoided before, except to hover at the periphery.

He finds they've come to a spot high on a hill, near the Hokage rock face, a perfect spot to view the fireworks out of the way and in private. He can sense some other chakras a ways away, but they are alone in the small patch Sasuke's found, mostly hidden by trees and bushes except where the edge of the cliff opens out into the village.

"This is the best spot. Naruto and I found it years ago, I made him promise to leave it to us tonight, not that *he* has a date."

"Hm, is this a date?" Kakashi asks, half teasing.

He sits against a tree as Sasuke turns back to him with an expression he wants to call pouty.

“One of many. Though I haven’t kept track.”

“Well, if we’re counting any time it’s just been us then...21.”

Sasuke stills, suddenly looking shy.

“You counted?”

He shrugs and then it’s Kakashi who feels embarrassed enough to look away, “I have a good memory. Now, are you going to sit? You’ll miss it, staring at me like that. I’m pretty, I know.”

A mischievous glint appears in Sasuke’s eyes then, and he plops down in the spot between Kakashi’s legs, not minding as he freezes and watches in confusion as Sasuke gets comfortable against his chest, pulling Kakashi’s arms around him.

“There. Happy?”

He feels the small laugh Kakashi lets out, the heat of him relaxing and even gently resting his chin atop Sasuke’s head as they wait for the fireworks to start. When they do, the eclectic display of jutsu-manipulated sparks keeps them entertained for the next little while. Kakashi feels himself relax more as they go on, their soft colourful glow and Sasuke’s warmth and occasional comment lulling him into a peace he’s not often treated to.

A silence reigns when the noise and display fades. Kakashi will be leaving tomorrow afternoon for at least the better part of a year, if not

longer. The uncertainty of that isn't lost on either of them. He finds himself curling his arms tighter around Sasuke's smaller figure between them.

"Will you look after my plants while I'm gone? Make sure the place doesn't get too musty?"

"You don't have to ask."

Sasuke's tone is obviously saddened.

Kakashi hesitates before asking his next question, "Would you like it if I wrote to you? I don't know how consistent I can be but we could use my summons-"

He's cut off as Sasuke turns in his arms, Kakashi having to lean up and back to avoid a head butt.

"Would I like it?"

"...I just thought-"

"*Of course* I'd like it, what kind of question is that? Did you think I'd not want that if it was an option?"

Sasuke's face is both annoyed and upset.

"I don't want to impose on you, you'll be busy too."

“For the record, you can *impose* on me all you want. In whatever way,” Sasuke sighs, fiddling with Kakashi’s collar and refusing to meet his eyes, “Didn’t think I’d have to spell it out still.”

He clears his throat, feeling some mix of awkward and flattered.

“In our case... it’s best you do.”

“Dunno if I should now, wouldn’t want your time away to get too hard,” Sasuke answers, a mischievous light in his eye despite the resignation still present.

He tilts forward then so their noses brush, Kakashi choosing to see where Sasuke wants to take this, hands resting on his hips neutrally. It’s dark enough away from the village lights and in the absence of the fireworks that they can only see outlines and shadows, Sharingans not in play. He feels lips brush against his cheek, sweet and innocent, moving up to his temple. Hands curl against his mask then and though Sasuke won’t be able to see his face, he gets the sense that isn’t the point, and he doesn’t stop him from tugging the fabric down.

Kakashi isn’t sure what he’d been expecting. In many ways, he hadn’t been expecting this at all - their relationship becoming physical or anything more than a sheet of paper filed away in Konoha’s archives. As the months had wore on though, things had shifted and now with his looming departure he can’t say he’s surprised Sasuke is seeking affection in a more intimate way. The boy he’d come to know is as loving as he is tenacious, tactile and open. His kisses are tentative and curious. When Kakashi responds, head tilting and mouth parting, he feels the way Sasuke’s remaining barriers fall, hands sliding around his neck as he pushes himself further into Kakashi’s lap.



Kakashi's never really been much of a kisser, the few he's had he barely remembers, and he gets the sense Sasuke hasn't done much of it himself either, but they soon find an easy rhythm. His hands leave hips to curl around Sasuke's back and his nape, pressing him closer still, and for the first time Kakashi knows what it is to hunger for another person. When his mouth finds a sensitive spot on Sasuke's neck that makes him gasp and grind into him, he pulls back, senses widening from the narrow point they'd been focused on.

They're out of breath, Kakashi's mask still down around his neck as Sasuke rests his forehead against one of Kakashi's shoulders, his hands curled into the lapels of Kakashi's yukata and wrinkling the fabric.

"Probably not a good idea..." he says, trailing off. He rubs Sasuke's back, wanting to assure him.

"Yeah...I know, but to be clear, I want to. I really, really want to."

Dark eyes glisten at him, lit faintly by the moonlight.

"Fuck..." Kakashi breathes.

"Yes."

He laughs, "Stop. You know, everyone said you were a handful. But I never did like being bored."

Sasuke rests against him, ear to his chest and he feels the way they begin to breathe in tandem. He reaches for one of Sasuke's hands, pressing his lips to the back of it, squeezing it once before he sets it back down on Sasuke's lap.

“I’ll see you soon.”

Chapter End Notes

Find me [here](#)

# Them - Part II

## Chapter Notes

Funny story, I may have split that last chapter too soon....so this one is like 15k words. I also think I might have switched POV in the middle of a scene somewhere but I REALLY wanted to get this out and wrap this story up. Tags have been updated. It has been fun!

Very background ShiIta and Itachi/Izumi and mentions of old clan rituals involving sex so, just FYI.

See the end of the chapter for more [notes](#)

*Shisui once told me the reason you like tomatoes so much is because Itachi hates them and you thought you'd be a better shinobi if you ate a bowl in one sitting. Is that true?*

*Shisui is a liar and not to be trusted ever. But that is true.*

*Are you eating well, wherever you are?*

*What's your favourite food? I can't believe I never asked.*

*Eggplant miso soup. It was my dad's best recipe.*

*You might not be an old man but you sure have old man tastes.*

*Do you also drink barley water?*

*...Only occasionally.*

*Also, Happy Birthday, Sasuke. I hope you like the gift,  
the smithys here are some of the best around.*

*Are you kidding? I love it! The hilt is beautiful,  
where did they find a blue stone the exact shade of the Uchiha banners?  
And the engraving of the crest...you must have done that yourself.  
I promise I'll be perfect with a tanto by the time you're back.*

*Looking forward to it. I might not be able to write much for a bit,  
we're travelling soon. Stay healthy and safe, okay?*

*I've been taking care of myself and I only hope you are doing the same...*

*I think you'd like the town we were in last.*

*Quiet, lot's of animals in the forest and scenic.*

*Maybe we can come visit it some time.*

*I miss you.*

Kakashi stares at the three word missive for a long time.

Shisui sits beside him, holding out a beer wordlessly. Well, wordlessly for as long as Shisui can manage, which isn't long.

“Who pissed in your tea?”

Kakashi regards him flatly. Their room is barely more than a studio, hardly glamorous, but he imagines it would be much different if he were staying in it with Sasuke. The cramped bed and tiny kitchen wouldn't seem so bad then. Falling asleep to his affectionate betrothed curled in his arms in the small space and twirling around each other in the mornings to make breakfast would be less unwelcome and more quaint. Far from the annoyance of waking in the night to Shisui's kicks and his inability to cook anything without endless clanging. He's both grateful and regretful he'd gotten accustomed to Sasuke's tender affection before leaving, it only means he feels the loss keenly now. He shakes his head, he really has been reading too many romance novels lately and Shisui doesn't deserve his misplaced frustration.

“Geeze,” the Uchiha says then, “I know I'm not your pretty boyfriend but no need to glare that much.”

“He's not really my boyfriend.”

“Isn't he? Well, I guess he's *much* more.”

Kakashi has a thought then, one that might not have bothered him before but now feels like a heavy weight in his chest.

“What?”

“He’s probably feeling lonely. I wouldn’t blame him if- it’s not like we even...maybe we *should* have talked about it, but we didn’t,” he winces here, a memory surfacing, “Not after I basically told him he could do what he wanted, *with* whoever he wanted, when we first met...”

Shisui only laughs, nudging his shoulder.

“Hey, come on. Sasuke is definitely a one man kind of guy. Honestly, he’d kill me for saying this, but he’s thought of you two as a couple for years now. You have nothing to worry about there. He misses *you* . He doesn’t want a body.” Shisui grins wickedly, disturbingly similar to the way he does when he’s successfully snuck up on an enemy with his shunshin, “As far as I know? Been saving himself up, *all* for you.”

He looks away, glad his mask can hide most of his reaction to *that* statement.

“Don’t tell me that,” he trails off, he’d rebelled against the engagement himself, didn’t think it had mattered and such loyalty isn’t expected in marriages like theirs especially before the ink has even been placed, “I haven’t saved a damn thing.”

“Oh, well...I don’t think *that’s* true,” Shisui says matter-of-factly.

Before Kakashi can ask what he means, Shisui stands again leaving him to his thoughts with parting words delivered in the gentler tone he usually reserves for Itachi.

“I’ve definitely never seen you look at anyone the way you look at him.”

“Sasuke, we could train today if you like.”

Sasuke has been more distracted since Kakashi left. Normally, Fugaku’s offering would be welcomed, craved after even. He’d be lying if he says it doesn’t bother him that his son doesn’t look very enthused today though, not after spending ages staring at a parchment out in the garden before transcribing a brief looking message and sending it off.

“Thank you, father. But I’m beat today. Naruto went nuts with the clones earlier.”

Fugaku looks at him askance.

“If you’re sure.”

Sasuke nods, excusing himself and heading to his room. Fugaku lets out a sigh and turns to his wife.

“Tired, my ass, he’s never turned down a chance to train. He’s been pouting about Kakashi being gone for the last two months. Surely he should have gotten back to normal by now.”

Mikoto looks at him with amusement from the table.

“Jealous?”

“Of course not,” he grumbles.

She sets down the book she’d been reading, raising a teasing eyebrow.

“Sasuke used to be chasing after you and Itachi, trying to impress you both. But there’s a new man in his life now and you know what they say about absence,” her voice almost a sing-song tone.

She laughs at his frown and stands, wrapping her arms around his waist and leaning up to kiss the worry lines away on his forehead. He tilts down to meet her and thinks of being away from her for nearly a year. It makes something in him soften.

“Isn’t it a good thing our son is actually taken with his match?” she asks.

“I suppose.”

“And Kakashi...he’s clearly grown to feel strongly for Sasuke, too. He cares about him. A lot.”

“I know.”

Fugaku is still frowning, but his mind is far away.



“It’s okay to be worried about Kakashi.”

“No one needs to worry about Kakashi, except whether Shisui will drive him mad...”

He doesn’t deny it, though. Over the years he has come to care for Kakashi. From the boy so resolved to see himself to an early grave, to the man that had somehow put more smiles on his son’s face than he could count, despite Kakashi’s own being as reserved as ever. Now that Sasuke has become attached he has to worry about the effects on him too, should anything happen to the famed copy nin, however unlikely.

“It’s still okay,” she says knowingly before a cheeky smile appears, “And to worry for Shisui.”

“That brat is too good to get himself killed, they both are...and good thing, too.”

He lets Mikoto step out of his hold before heading over to Sasuke’s room. The door is ajar, Sasuke at his desk with a book open. He steps closer, looking over his son’s shoulder.

“Sealing? Didn’t think you were very interested in the more advanced techniques. Isn’t that more Naruto’s thing?”

Sasuke shrugs, turning in his chair.

“Doesn’t hurt to learn.”

“Kakashi’s quite the sealer, too.” Fugaku murmurs, before he sits down on the bed and folds his hands, “The kid’s only been gone a short while. You miss him that much, do you?”

Sasuke snorts.

“Oh, is that a laugh finally?”

“Just funny hearing you call him a *kid* .”

“He is a kid, to me.”

Fugaku tilts his head then before he can attempt to, probably unsuccessfully, talk Sasuke out of his funk. There is a commotion down the hall.

“Sounds like your troublesome friends are here. Good,” he stands, laying a hand on Sasuke’s shoulder, “What you’re going to do is let them drag you off to whatever infernal place they’ve dug up this time so I can read without hearing your moping in every corner of this house.”

As if on cue, Naruto and Ino bound into the room, looking far too enthusiastic to be in Fugaku’s presence. Sasuke’s birthday is tomorrow and by the looks on their faces he surmises they intend to begin celebrating early.

“He’s off tomorrow,” he says, pausing to look at them both seriously, “But I want him back in one piece and I don’t want to hear any of you were rounded up into the drunk tank on the eve of my youngest’s birthday, you hear?”

“Sir, yessir,” Naruto and Ino say almost in unison.

He sighs heavily before he nods at them and walks out.

Kakashi can't come home fast enough.

\* \* \*

It's fun, being out with people he loves and watching them let go, even if Sasuke spends most of the time distracted despite his best efforts. He sips slowly at his drink, watching couples dance and get carried away in the corners. Naruto and Ino are charming more drinks out of a group of foreign jonin, their blonde haired blue eyed combination attack ensuring none of them are in need of a wallet tonight. Patrons have tried to coax him into some casual flirting all night, most knowing he's spoken for, but Sasuke is loyal to a fault even when it's harmless. Now that he's so far away from Kakashi it feels even more important.

He wonders if physical distance is easier for Kakashi, being the older of them, though they hadn't broached that boundary yet. He trusts him, but he damns his own restlessness. Most days recently he'd been unable to get to sleep, waking fitfully and dreaming more often than not of his more risque imaginings. He'd made the mistake of reading through the old archives in the Uchiha shrine, curious about old wedding traditions. He'd stumbled on the more ancient rituals, now mostly forgotten, but the details of firelit ceremonies and consummations hidden only by gauzy canopies overtake the darker corners of his mind. He wonders if this is an effect of Kakashi's absence, his fantasies turning more desperate and wanton with distance. He can't be sure he won't pin him right at the village gate when he finally returns, damn the audience.

In a strange way, time seems to move slower in his relationship with Kakashi. They don't have time for long letters and the notes they send often go weeks before being replied to, usually on Kakashi's end. He's on a sensitive mission and Sasuke doesn't begrudge him, waiting patiently for his eventual responses, but it makes it feel like their interactions are moving on a different plane, far behind the pace of his real life as the months go by.

*Itachi told Shisui you went out for your birthday.*

*Did you have a good time?*

*Being the most sober one with Naruto and Ino is  
something you need to witness to understand.*

*But yeah, I guess I did. I still miss you.*

*I miss you, too. Shisui isn't nearly as cute.*

*Don't tell him that, his sulking is unbearable.*

*Don't worry, when you get back I refuse  
to do anything but make up for lost time.*

*Please don't tell me how.*

*I don't even have my own room here.*

*Well. If you insist on being left to your imagination.*

*Not sure that's much better, considering your reading material ;)*

\* \* \*

Really, Kakashi should be better at ignoring his baser instincts, if only to spare some hot water for Shisui in the shower - deservedness notwithstanding. Most of the time he's not thinking of touching Sasuke like that. He misses the feel of a head on his shoulder, a hand curled around his forearm, the weight of him as Sasuke laughs atop him after a successful takedown during a spar. He's come to see their potential life together in all its shades though, and those range all the way from the soft yellows and blues of sweet, early mornings to the dark reds and violets of *very* late nights.

Sasuke doesn't help, he's not even a tease so much as he is brutally honest. He wears his heart on his sleeve in a way that is rare, rarer still in shinobi. Kakashi has come to learn this is typical of the Uchiha, despite their reservedness in public. Sasuke sees no shame in telling his future husband how much he wants him, to be near, to be touched. It's always some throw away line at the end of a letter that sends Kakashi's mind into a tailspin.

*Ino dragged me shopping. It's not like I go anywhere besides missions,  
what would I need new clothes for?*

*Then I thought it might be nice, you know. I picked up some stuff I thought  
you might like on me.*

*Not so many interesting missions lately.*

*Mostly excessive escorts for rich nobles. A few theft retrievals.*

*Guess it's better than being holed up in my room.*

*But I wouldn't mind being locked in here if you were, too.*

Kakashi isn't used to being so openly wanted. He's been desired after, parts of him anyway, for various things: his skill, his body, his reputation, but not much beyond. There had been a time when even being his friend was a black mark, but Sasuke has no problem taking his hand like a lover, uncaring of what anyone else thinks, or telling him in no uncertain terms where he stands with him. Of looking nothing but flushed with pleasure at the idea of them being finally married anytime someone brings it up.

And so Kakashi, despite time and distance, falls. Not all at once, but like the small rocks down a mountain, each piece knocking more down along the way, bit by bit rubble piling up until he and Shisui and their team are ready to wrap things up nearly ten months later and he sends word to Sasuke that they will be home.

The reply comes quickly.

*I can't wait. Stay safe, don't rush. I'll be waiting.*

*Come home to me.*

How long has it been, hearing a phrase like that? If he's honest, he never has. His father had died before he began taking missions and he'd never had a partner.

*Come home to me.*

A landslide now, boulders. Any final hesitations crash and break as they hit ground and he is well and truly fallen.

“Ready, Captain?”

Shisui’s voice brings him out of his mind, and he folds the parchment up, tucking it in his front pocket with care. The rest of Sasuke’s letters are sealed away safely but soon he will have the real thing.

“Ready. Let’s go home.”

\* \* \*

Sasuke is taking his shift on village patrol when he hears the commotion and feels familiar chakra spikes near the gates. Kakashi and his team are due back soon, but he isn’t expecting them until early the next morning. He speeds there, skidding to a halt as he spots the small crowd by the gate. He just barely refrains from yelling out their names, recognizing the ANBU. He can smell a coppery scent he hates as soon as he’s close. He sees him, silver hair matted and without its usual volume, his limp body forming a pool of blood beneath his feet. Kakashi is heavily injured, blood seeping from wounds he can see and others he can’t while another ANBU he recognizes as Shisui holds him up.

He runs to Kakashi’s side, taking the place of one of the other shinobi that had come to hold him up, another pressing a hand to his wounds.

“What happened?”

“Sasuke,” Kakashi breathes, his form relaxing and eye falling closed,

weight becoming heavier.

Sasuke looks frantic as he looks to Shisui, his clansman's distress obvious behind the mask in his body language, limbs tight and knuckles white where they grip Kakashi.

"Ambush," he says tightly, "Too many. He fought most of them off but we couldn't protect all our team without taking critical hits. He- *fuck* , he jumped in front of *me* . I managed to shunsin most of the way back we had left but I'm well out of chakra now. He needs a hospital."

"Oh for fucks sake, you idiot," Sasuke says, shuffling Kakashi over to one of the others. It pains him to let go, but they're wasting time. "Fine. You guys get him there, I'm calling Lady Tsunade."

"No-"

"Captain, please," Shisui says through gritted teeth and that's when Sasuke knows it must be serious.

"Are *you* okay?"

Shisui nods, "Nothing but superficial wounds, a ton of them, but I'm not bleeding out."

"Good. Get him there, *now* ."



Sasuke waits in the small living room of Kakashi's apartment, the limited space packed with his team and a couple friends. They had stabilized Kakashi at the hospital before moving him here, knowing his disdain for the place. Sasuke's knee jumps as he taps his foot impatiently, until Itachi rests a hand on it, its gentle weight and Itachi's command to breathe enough to get him to calm down if only slightly.

"The fact they were able to move him means Lady Tsunade was able to work her magic. It's going to be okay, Sasuke."

By the time Tsunade comes out of Kakashi's bedroom Sasuke has gnawed through more than one nail. Shisui, Itachi, and Yamato take their leave, his brother giving him a tight hug before he goes. Sasuke wants to run into the room immediately, but Tsunade puts a gentle hand on his shoulder.

"Give him a moment. He's still coming out of the sleep we induced. Be a dear and make the stubborn fool some tea, will you? Maybe something light to eat."

"Of course."

Something to do, that's good. He can manage that. He walks over to the tiny kitchen, hands still trembling, freshly stocked with new groceries by himself only the day before. Kakashi's apartment is small and it's no trouble for Sasuke to funnel more chakra into his ears to listen in on the conversation in the bedroom as Kakashi comes to. He probably shouldn't be eavesdropping and feels bad for it, but he's too worried to stop himself.

"Welcome back," he hears Tsunade say.

“Thank you...for healing me, too. That was not how I expected that mission to end...”

“Never is, is it?”

A beat of silence before she starts speaking again.

“Shisui and the rest of your team gave a full report, you can add any details later. But nevermind all that, we have more important things to discuss. I heard you were worried about your nuptials but something tells me that sweetheart out there is far from opposed to being your husband, Kakashi. Could be that he has all the subtlety of a katon, the way he looks at you. In this, I daresay you have been lucky.”

A laugh, cut off prematurely with a sharp intake of breath. He winces knowing Kakashi is in pain.

“In this, yes, I have been. I don’t deny it. But has he?”

“You really are ignorant to your charms, aren’t you? If only you knew the veritable lineup of hopefuls that ask after your status every week at the mission desk...only for a good chunk of them to offer to be your side quests so to speak, when they learn you are *very* spoken for, and by a clan no less. Shizune and Sakura keep me up to date on the rumour mill.”

Sasuke tenses at that. He thinks back to Kakashi’s words to him nearly two years ago now, that their marriage would be no more than a piece of paper and he could do as he pleases. He’s sure things have changed, but he still holds his breath as he awaits Kakashi’s answer.

“They can tell the lot of them to mind their business and that I’m not interested.”

A laugh from Tsunade, something warm in her voice as she continues.

“Maybe Sasuke will take care of that. He’s a spirited little thing, always has been...and very obviously besotted with you. I think he’s just what you need. Not to mention with some more training he’ll easily stand beside you as a shinobi, and there aren’t many with that claim.”

“That he is,” Sasuke smiles at the fondness he hears, before it drops at what follows, “What if...he’s only eighteen. I don’t doubt his feelings, but feelings change. Sometimes within months, let alone years down the line.”

“I do understand your concern...but we can’t predict the future, in any scenario. Is there a point in making this harder on you both than it needs to be? You don’t seem opposed either, anymore. Why not embrace it?”

Sasuke holds his breath, again.

“It’s not one-sided...not in that sense. I just never thought of there being room for something like this in my life. For someone.”

“Things change. *You’ve* changed,” Tsunade says, “I’m glad to see it, Kakashi. You must feel deeply for him.”

“I do.”

Sasuke feels his heart start back up at that, gripping the sides of the tray he'd put the tea and snacks on as he hears Tsunade shuffle and gather her things.

“Good. I'm putting you on leave for a bit. You haven't taken any time off that wasn't mandated since you graduated from the academy... enjoy your wedding, Kakashi. *And* your marriage, more importantly.”

Tsunade takes her leave, winking at Sasuke as he stands by the door and bows. He walks in slowly, setting the tray on the bedside table, sitting by Kakashi's feet as he thanks him and sips from the mug slowly. He'd wanted nothing more than to throw himself into Kakashi's arms when he anticipated his return, but he holds himself back in the face of the bandages taped all over his otherwise bare torso.

“Hey,” Kakashi says, voice rough, “Come here.”

Sasuke doesn't need to be told twice, he shuffles until he can lean beside Kakashi carefully, keeping his weight off him to wrap an arm around his waist, hiding his face in Kakashi's neck as gently as he can.

“You fucking terrified me.”

“I'm sorry. I made it back in time, though.”

The words are spoken into his hair, a hand rubbing up and down his side and he thinks *he* should be the one doing the comforting but that is Kakashi, always the leader and ever reliable. He settles in more

comfortably, legs curled up on the bed and staring up at Kakashi as if to memorize his still half-visible face. He grins at the red that appears on Kakashi's face when he realizes he's being observed so intensely.

"The place looks good."

"I cleaned and swapped out all the linens when you said you were due to come back, got groceries too..."

"I appreciate it. You know, you don't have to hang around here being my nursemaid."

Sasuke sits up again then, frowning at him.

"I'm not being your nursemaid, I'm being your partner. And anyway I've taken time off ahead of the wedding."

"Not that I wouldn't love having you with me," Kakashi begins, eyes softening, "But...you don't have better things to do? With the wedding coming up?"

Sasuke's lips turn down into a frown that almost seems involuntary.

"Yes, the wedding *to you* . Kind of necessitates that you be well and what good is a husband who spends more time on table settings than his injured spouse anyway? What do I have to do to make you believe that I want to spend time with you, after all this time?" Sasuke pauses then, weighing his next words, "Can I sleep here, with you?"

“Here? As in...?”

“Yes, in the bed,” Sasuke grins, “What, afraid I’ll jump you? Relax, I wouldn’t want to injure your old bones again.”

“Brat,” it’s said in a laugh, a hand pinching his side.

He spends the next couple of weeks like that, practically moved in. He wakes and sleeps with Kakashi, sharing a bed comfortably enough that they usually wake tangled up in each other - Sasuke tucked into Kakashi’s space or Kakashi curled protectively around his, nose pressed to his skin. They haven’t gone beyond that since Kakashi’s return. As much as Sasuke had fantasized about more, after Kakashi had come home injured none of that seemed important anymore. He’d been content to sit by his side, feel his presence and catch up. A week into this arrangement though, Kakashi’s condition improves and it becomes hard to ignore the reestablished tension.

It’s too early to turn in for the day but Sasuke falls asleep one afternoon as they lay in bed together, tired from the stress of looking after his injured lover and the wedding preparations. Kakashi’s energy has returned somewhat, but he has no problem following Sasuke into a short dreamless slumber. Sasuke jumps up an hour or so later, as the sun is setting, feeling Kakashi shift beneath him.

“I’m sorry, I tend to starfish when I sleep. You should have woken me, I didn’t hurt you did I?”

Kakashi shrugs, sitting up slightly to prop himself on pillows and ruffling his own hair, working out some tangles.

“No, you’re light as a feather,” he says with a wince as he stretches out carefully.

“No need to lie, I’m already marrying you,” Sasuke teases.

Kakashi’s soft laugh sends vibrations through him and he hums happily against his chest. The utter domesticity of the situation fills him with calm.

“I’m not. Besides that, you’re a sight for sore eyes. It helps that you’re warm and smell nice, too.”

Resisting the urge to preen, he peers up at Kakashi curiously.

“Your sense of smell...It’s why you wear the mask, right?”

“Part of it.”

He plants his face comfortably in Kakashi’s chest, breathing in his natural scent, the soaps he’d washed in the day before slightly faded and leaving behind hints of woodsmoke and pine.

“What do I smell like?”

He feels the shift and a face settling into his hair, breathing ruffling it slightly.

“Hm. If I had to put a name to it...toasted coconut. It’s sweet. But a little smokey. It’s...comforting. Familiar, now.”

He sits up slightly, reaching out to touch Kakashi's cheek gently, to brush under his eyes.

"I missed you," he says realizing he hasn't said it out loud yet.

"Me too," Kakashi pulls him closer, and he returns to rest on a strong chest. The steady breathing beneath his head is reassuring. Hands run through his hair and down his back and he feels himself melt into Kakashi's warmth.

"Do you mind?" he asks, knowing his weight is bearing down. Kakashi's injuries are long healed thanks to Tsunade's skill but he doesn't want to risk hurting him again.

"No, the ninken dog pile me all the time."

Sasuke lifts his head then to playfully glare at him.

"Comparing me to your dogs isn't the charming move you think it is."

"Well, you're also a lot prettier than they are, don't tell them that," Kakashi brushes aside a strand of hair from Sasuke's forehead, watching his face, chin perched on his chest and he can imagine they've been waking up like this for years. Sasuke's lashes are long and full, framing eyes the deepest shade of brown they are almost black. His warm skin colours under Kakashi's hand lips curving into a little half smile, a dimple appearing on one cheek.

"And I have plenty more moves."



“Fuck...” Sasuke lets out, it’s not a voice he’s heard come from Kakashi yet and it sends pleasant shivers down his spine, “I can’t wait for you to- *marry* me.”

Kakashi’s answering hum is amused, “ *Marry* you, huh?”

Sasuke nods, biting his lip as he grins mischievously, “Mhm.”

“Oh?”

Sasuke jumps up at the new voice that sounds behind him, looking back and sliding up the bed to sit beside Kakashi when he sees who it is, letting out a sigh. They both must have been very caught up to have not picked up on her approach.

“Good afternoon, Mom.”

“Ah...am I interrupting?” Mikoto says with a knowing smile, a graceful hand on her hip, “I can always come back if-”

“We weren’t doing anything,” Sasuke interrupts and Kakashi tamps down his own bashfulness at how disappointed Sasuke sounds at that but Mikoto only laughs softly, ruffling Sasuke’s hair as she sits at the foot of the bed.

“I’m sorry to come by like this, Kakashi, but Sasuke wanted to run this by you and we need to get the orders out. Won’t take long. He said this evening would be a good time, but I’m guessing that was before you found yourselves...occupied.”

Kakashi rubs the back of his head, “Ah, well it’s not-”

“No need to do all that,” Mikoto says dismissively, sifting through the items she’d brought, “Newlyweds are all the same. I’m sure I won’t see much of either of you for weeks after the wedding. At least I hope not.”

He really shouldn’t be able to turn so red at his age, he thinks. Mikoto sets the samples in front of them for flowers and decor and Sasuke shuffles closer, his chest brushing against Kakashi’s arm as he looks at the items in his lap and around the bed.

Kakashi offers input where asked, decisive and efficient. He isn’t much interested in the aesthetics of a wedding, though he appreciates the fine eye his mother-in-law to be is curating it with.

“I’m sure whatever you’ve both decided will do perfectly,” he says as they wrap up a short time later, Mikoto packing away the items she’d brought. She slows slightly and turns to him thoughtfully.

“Kakashi, I wanted to ask...whatever the circumstances, this is as much your wedding as Sasuke’s. Are there any Hatake traditions you would like to incorporate? You need only say.”

Sasuke peeks at Kakashi then, obviously curious himself. He’d felt startled at the unexpected question, but his expression relaxes as he meets Sasuke’s eyes briefly before beginning to speak.

“Well...there are many I don’t know the details of though I am sure they’re in the archives, but...the Hatake’s clan’s guardian animal is the wolf. In the old days when the clan lived more off the land it was tradition for the male, usually, to keep the pelt of a wolf that had died naturally, prepare it, and gift it to his partner. A symbol of protection,

of sorts, that the wolf's spirit would guard the hearth and home of a new family."

Kakashi is determinedly not looking at either of them.

"Well," Mikoto says with a slow smile, "that sounds awfully romantic. There aren't many wolves though in Fire Country...and you don't have much time to happen upon one who's happened to meet its end, do you?"

"No. But...I am in possession of the one my father gifted to my mother. I thought...if Sasuke is alright with it of course."

"I am," Sasuke says immediately, resisting the urge to do something more drastic, like kiss Kakashi senseless in front of his mother, "I will. Accept it, that is."

Mikoto leaves shortly after that, leaving them with a small secret smile that actually does get Sasuke to blush to his roots as he sends Kakashi off to do his physiotherapy while he prepares a meal.

The medical shinobi sent to check on Kakashi later that day is one Sasuke doesn't recognize. He's not very concerned, considering Kakashi had been healed by Tsunade herself and she would be coming by on her way home to check on him once more. The man checks Kakashi's vitals and completes a physical exam, making small talk as he goes.

"Ah, you're getting married soon, aren't you? To one of the Uchiha heirs?"

“Yes,” he hears Kakashi say.

“Congratulations. Isn’t it odd, though? Well, given your age and well, no disrespect but with what happened with your father...I assumed the Uchiha would be pickier. I suppose it’s not like you can have kids, right?”

Sasuke doesn’t need to hear anymore, he walks in with a tray and sets it down lightly, turning to smile at the medical nin.

“I like to think he was being saved up especially for me, I’m just sorry I took so long to arrive,” he drops a casual kiss on Kakashi’s temple, amused at the look on his face. He sits by him on the bed, tucking a leg underneath himself as he tilts his head curiously at the now flustered looking shinobi.

“And I’m really not sure what you meant by the other thing, I’m only sad we can’t *actually* combine our bloodlines. I’m sure we could all do with some Hatake in us.”

*An honour reserved for myself*, he thinks, and barely refrains from saying. The flustered shinobi leaves soon enough with a stilted goodbye and Sasuke happily escorts him out. He turns around to find Kakashi standing there, looking sheepish.

“Thank you.”

“You’re welcome,” he shifts slightly, weighing his next words, “You should feel proud of him...your father.”

It’s a topic he knows Kakashi doesn’t want to talk about, but he can’t

let it stand if others are going to use *his* name and his clan to drag Kakashi and his kin through the mud.

“He did what he felt was right at the time, with the best and most noble intentions...it’s all any of us can do. I would take your name in a heartbeat. I would wear your crest. This *isn’t* one way, in any sense. Not to me.”

When Kakashi does lift his head, his hands come up to cup Sasuke’s cheeks impossibly gently. Sasuke lays his own hands over them, peering up at Kakashi with determination. He won’t let there be any doubt in Kakashi’s mind where he stands.

“This might have started as an agreement that didn’t include either of us. It’s not anymore, this isn’t between my clan and the village. It’s between me and you.”

\* \* \*

Itachi and Shisui accompany Sasuke to his final fitting a few days later, he’s grown even taller since the last one six months ago and the tailor re-pins the hem of his kimono as he stands up on the pedestal.

His brother is smiling in the background, expression teasing as it so rarely is.

“You’ve been spending too much time with Shisui,” Sasuke says before his brother can get a word in edgewise, “My dear sister-in-law is quite generous.”

“That she is,” Shisui drawls, “Too bad *I’m* not, but lucky for you Itachi has banned me from being mean today.”

“You do look tired, Sasuke. Thought a break was in order.”

He rolls his eyes at the both of them, “Gee, thanks.”

“I’m sure Captain appreciates you looking after him, you have always had mother hen tendencies, though that could have been a natural effect of having Naruto on your team,” Shisui adds.

“Was that a compliment in there somewhere?”

Shisui lifts himself gracefully from the velvet couch he’d been lounging on, coming around to stand between Sasuke and the mirror. It’s easy to forget with his cunning face, soft head of curls and lanky frame that Shisui is among the most feared and revered shinobi alive, but when the humour fades Sasuke knows he is looking at one of the people he can trust the most on this earth.

“You can take the ribbing, I know. But you’ll have to take a lot worse, some of it from within the clan. Itachi and I are here, so are your parents...much as it might be a love match now don’t forget it was never intended to be that way and some might not be so happy to see that.”

Itachi’s eyes meet his in the mirror, smile smoothing out as he sighs.

“You’re also the first of any clan head’s descendant to wed an outsider, so to speak. Captain is...respected now, certainly, in a way he was not then, even by the Uchiha. But it does not mean they like

him. Especially not when he's become so skilled with the Sharingan. He will make sure you are comfortable, even at cost to himself. You shouldn't let him."

Sasuke nods, knowing it would not be the same for Kakashi as it had been for his mother or Izumi, both of whom are Uchiha by ancestry in their own right. Kakashi isn't even being brought in by the clan out of respect or love, not even for an alliance. Their contract and union is simply a surety, a bond, even a penance - sought for a disagreement now as old as he is. He'd seen some of their sneers at the engagement, self-satisfied and smug in the face of the grace Mikoto had ingrained in them all and Kakashi's own brand of quiet dignity.

"He won't be an outsider," he says, stepping off the platform and towards the change room, "I will see to that personally."

\* \* \*

The morning of his wedding, Sasuke is woken up by his mother drawing his curtains at the first peek of sunlight. He'd been sleeping at home for a week now, avoiding Kakashi as is custom despite his own frustration with it. They hadn't even sent notes, Mikoto's stern instructions not to be disobeyed and his own embarrassment at having been caught by Shisui trying to smuggle out something as quaint as a *love letter* curbing his attempts to circumvent them.

He finds himself in what is usually the bridal suite of the main hall, several clan women there as his attendants, perfunctorily tugging at his clothes and maneuvering this way and that with clinical movements and teasing glances alike. They help him groom to perfection, *everywhere*, much to his chagrin as he recalls the sting of waxing. He leaves the shower with his skin smooth and scrubbed pink and he's guided to another room, this one less chaotic. There is a tub in the centre, filled with cloudy water and topped with flower petals, sweet scents wafting up with the steam.

“Step in,” Mikoto calls out, in her own dressing gown with her hair already done up, her back to him as she stirs something in a bowl, “It’s a milk bath.”

Sasuke slips out of his robe, sinking into the bath until he’s neck deep. He sighs at the soothing heat that envelopes him. It’s not often a shinobi gets to indulge like this, even Uchiha are working shinobi and don’t have the time to pamper themselves regularly. The women kneel at his sides and he looks on in confusion as they pull his arms from the milk and begin massaging them from forearm to fingertips.

“Some traditions are nice to keep,” Mikoto says with a grin towards his blissed out face, “And you never do treat yourself.”

She pours the mix of oils she’d been preparing into the liquid and Sasuke rests his head on the lip of the tub, his head and arms the only visible parts of him peeking out from the soothing bath.

“Am I the first male to get the bridal treatment?”

“Not the first...though with you being a clan head’s child, it is more than unusual. Though you deserve a little spa day after looking after your intended so well.”

She sits behind his head, and he feels the gentle massage of her hands against his scalp, lathering up a sweet smelling shampoo. He feels like an old world prince.

“Not that I’m complaining about being pampered but what’s the point? I do know how to bathe on my own, you know.”



The women share knowing glances as he pouts at their obvious amusement.

“Hmm well, getting a bride or bridegroom all nice and relaxed and soft? See where this is going?” she says with a laugh, tilting his head back to meet his eyes, “In the old days, the birds and bees might have been introduced here though I’m sure you are familiar...”

Sasuke flushes, resisting the urge to splash at her as the others hum and murmur in amusement.

“Of course it’s all to ensure a productive and *fruitful* wedding night. Which yours can, and should still be, I might add-”

“Mother...”

They laugh at his flustered tone and he sinks further into the water as his hair is rinsed off.

“Sweetheart, it’s nothing to be embarrassed about, I’ve seen how you look at him. There are worse things than being head over heels for the man you’re about to marry and allow to do unspeakable things to you-”

“I thought this bath was supposed to be relaxing.”

She laughs again and he finds himself joining her, finally, her amusement infectious. It is a happy day, after all, despite everything. He feels a kiss pressed to the back of his head and she stands and

signals to the attendants to leave.

“So it is. Soak for a bit longer, then rinse off. Your clothes are laid out in the dressing room.”

He’s expecting to be alone when he enters the dressing room in his robe not ten minutes later, but is surprised to find Ino and Naruto there. They jump up and rush towards him.

“What are you two doing here?” he asks, though he’s grinning.

“Well, we wanted to be in the ceremonial bath but you know, Uchiha only.” Ino answers, “But your mother did allow a break in tradition for us, so here we are!”

She pulls him in for a hug and is followed by Naruto who hums cheerily into his neck.

“You smell like cake.”

“Taste like one too I bet, after that little spa experience.”

“Shut it, *why* are you even here? I can dress myself, too...”

“You should be thrilled I’m here,” Ino says, “This is all the village has been talking about, even if most of them aren’t invited. Now you can ensure the gossip goes where you want it.”

“I want *no* gossip...Kakashi seems like a private man. He’s probably stressed enough as it is.”

“Look at you, the dutiful husband already,” she coos, “Speaking of which, I had one of your attendants drop off something for you to the river house earlier.”

“The river house?” Naruto says, wrinkling his nose, “You mean that creepy old cabin by the mouth of the Naka?”

“It’s not creepy when it’s open for guests,” Sasuke sighs, feeling his nerves start up again, “It only looks that way because it’s dark and shuttered most of the time.”

Ino smiles devilishly as she turns to Naruto to explain.

“They say the spirits tend to it when it’s empty. It’s tradition for newly wedded Uchiha to stay there on their wedding night. Out of the way of the rest of the district, you know, for *privacy* . Good thing too, since Sasuke’s voice carries.”

He ignores their amusement in favour of raising a brow at Ino.

“And what exactly did you send over?”

“My own personal presents,” she says, “not fit for the gift table or the Yamanaka clan’s *official* well wishes. Just some more...unique supplies. Though knowing the Uchiha I can’t be sure they aren’t covered already...”

He turns away to hide his embarrassment, sorting through the layers he'll be donning shortly as Naruto hoots at Ino's salacious hinting.

"Don't be shy Sasuke, if this is a banquet, then you are the feast," Ino says, "Or more like a cherry on top of a perfect evening?"

"Literally," Naruto adds with a grin, dodging the decorative pillow Sasuke flings his way.

"Why don't you both be useful and help me put on all this stuff so I'm not late?"

They figure out the various layers and adornments, fastening and tying him in. He stares at himself in the mirror, tilting his head and turning this way and that. He looks good, he knows. The dark colours of his kimono are still masculine though with softer touches in the embroidery, but Kakashi has never been taken in by the superficial.

"*Fuck*, I did not want to be one of those people who cries at weddings," Ino says before she slaps her hands down on his shoulders to look at him, "And I won't be, you go in there and knock 'em dead, Uchiha."

Naruto moves in to give him a nearly bone-crushing hug, his face split into a wide smile when he pulls back.

"Listen, you're my best friend. And I'll never be able to pay you back for everything you did for me, so...I'm just- so happy to see you happy, man."

Ino pushes them out of the room before they can get too sentimental,

rambling about getting to the good stuff as they descend the stairs to the grand room where the ceremony and reception will take place. They pause at the entrance to the hall, now emptied as all the guests have taken their places.

He can see Kakashi from where he is, though they are still hidden from view. His soon to be husband is tall and regal in black, somehow looking perfectly fitting with the Uchiha despite his distinctive silver hair and cooler complexion standing out next to them. Sasuke can't help staring. Maybe he should be playing more coy, holding more of himself in reserve. But it's not his way, not the *Uchiha* way, at least not with those they let in and find deserving.

Will Kakashi come to feel the same for him?

"I know what you're thinking," Ino says from his side, playfulness still lingering in her eyes but mostly replaced with something sincere and heartfelt, "I'm sure he already does."

Sasuke finds his father by a windowed alcove after Ino and Naruto head in to take their seats, where the hall overlooks a strip of the Naka River. The ceremony would start soon and he can see the guests inside through the doors, clan heads and elders, their close friends outside of the Uchiha, and officials who had been invited. His father eventually turns to look at him tilting his head.

"It's a good thing you got your mother's looks," he says, and in a rare show of affection he cups Sasuke's cheek with his hand gently for a moment.

Sasuke catches it as it falls and Fugaku looks at him, a subdued note of surprise and question in his eyes. It's not like him to be so frank with his father, certainly not on a topic like this, but it's more important than ever.

“I want you to know...you shouldn’t feel guilty about it anymore. You don’t have to worry. He’s kind, and protective...and smart and *good* -”

“Sasuke-”

“And I love him.”

Fugaku doesn’t look away from his face for a long moment, his eyes not unkind but steady on Sasuke’s own. Looking for a sign of a lie, of distress, of anything. Seemingly finding none, his body appears to relax from its rigid stance and settles as he gently squeezes Sasuke’s hand in his before letting it drop.

“Well,” Fugaku says, voice gruff as he clears his throat, “Don’t make it too easy on him, you hear? You are still an Uchiha, after all.”

\* \* \*

Kakashi has always known Sasuke is beautiful. One would have to be devoid of both sight and taste to think otherwise but he still manages to leave Kakashi speechless. It’s a heady sort of power, to hold the attention of the one that has everyone else’s, because Kakashi is sure not a soul in that hall is looking at him the moment Sasuke walks in but Sasuke seems to only have eyes for him.

Sasuke looks resplendent, like a noble in one of Kakashi’s novels. Draped in an ox-blood silk kimono and an obi so deeply blue it’s almost black, his ornate ceremonial tachi sheathed at his hip. Kakashi lets out a breath at the sight of the wolf pelt draped across his shoulders, not looking out of place at all among the Uchiha garb. Sasuke’s skin seems to glow from the inside out as he meets Kakashi’s

gaze, face remaining calm as his eyes seem to smile just for him, his own expression showing appreciation for what he sees as well.

As Sasuke begins his slow walk up to the front Kakashi takes the opportunity to drink more of him in. The subtle, thin gold headpiece he wears resting in midnight hair and the peek of a delicate sparkle at the dip in his neck promise more buried treasure Kakashi has no doubt he will enjoy discovering later.

Then his eyes widen, because there in that soft valley of skin between his collarbones nestles *his* clan sigil, resting between the Uchiha's stamped on the lapels of Sasuke's kimono. The simple squares symbolizing the Hatake look right at home there.

*This isn't one-sided, in any sense.*

Kakashi is more thankful than ever for his Sharingan then, both for allowing him to engrave the sight of Sasuke looking up at him into his mind forever and for ensuring he has memorized the steps and words of the ceremony. He's not sure he would have been able to recall them now otherwise, as preoccupied as he is. Sasuke's hands are warm and soft in his, the now sweeter scent of him driving Kakashi to distraction more than once.

When the last *I do* is said, he can hear the polite clapping and more raucous cheers of some of their friends as they walk back out past their audience, Sasuke's fingers interlaced with his own. His family files out with them and they don't stop until they've bypassed the waiting area to the hall, into the private room behind one of the doors there, as the others file out to head to the reception.

Fugaku claps Kakashi on the shoulder.

“I suppose you are now well and truly welcomed to the clan. Kakashi, I know this did not start with the most...pure of intentions. But now, I can say I am pleased to leave my son in your capable hands.”

“You say that like I can’t take care of myself,” Sasuke chimes, ducking away from Shisui and Itachi’s hands as they ruffle at his hair, Izumi’s laughter following.

“Well, I’ll be happy to know you aren’t doing it alone.”

Kakashi bows deeply, until Fugaku and Mikoto coax him up. Her gaze is soft as she pats his cheek gently.

“I’m sure our guests can’t wait to start eating and we shouldn’t keep them waiting.”

They begin to head back out, and Kakashi is about to follow when Sasuke tugs him aside, not missing the way Mikoto pulls the others along after her to disappear behind the door and down the hallway, giving them their moment alone.

Kakashi doesn’t have time to prepare as he’s pressed to the door immediately as it clicks shut and Sasuke leans up to lock lips with him. He pulls him closer, hands curling in the heavy silk of the kimono as Sasuke tugs at his hair and arches into his body.

“You look incredible like this,” Sasuke says, lips swollen and red, “It’s a crime you don’t dress up more.”

“Speak for yourself,” he dips a finger behind the neckline of the red kimono, sliding down and brushing soft skin as he does, thoroughly



enjoying the shiver it brings out of Sasuke.

“You’re still a Hatake and always will be,” he says then between kisses and breaths, laughing when Kakashi chases him as he attempts to finish his thought, “But...you’re also an Uchiha now. Ours. And especially *mine* .”

Sasuke’s body is warm against his, his arms around Kakashi’s waist, head tilted up to peer at him with eyes that look as mischievous as they do besotted. He tugs him closer still, rubbing his back. For someone as reserved in his affection as he is, this need to eliminate any space is novel and thrilling.

Truthfully, the idea of it *all* fills him with some incomparable emotion.

To have Fugaku’s gruff approval, Mikoto’s warm acceptance, Itachi’s respect and Shisui’s affectionate ribbing...and Sasuke. Sasuke, of course, who is entirely his own - approving, accepting, who both respects him and treats him with affection. Who has loved and wanted him unabashedly and without reservation...

There is a knock on the door behind him and he snaps out of the haze he is in when a suggestive drawl filters through the door.

“Much as I hate to be a wet blanket, you two are expected to at least *appear* at your reception before it becomes impossible to get a hold of you for the next week, you know.”

“Thank you, Shisui,” he says, very obviously out of breath despite his best efforts and the smug laugh he hears disappear as the other Uchiha leaves them making it obvious he’d heard it, too.

“Let’s get it over with,” Sasuke sighs, taking his hand again and opening the door, “so we can get to more *important* things.”

\* \* \*

Kakashi hasn’t felt nervous in a long time.

It turns out seeing and being the cause of so much death takes out a lot of that inclination in one’s mind. What could there possibly be to be nervous about in the face of all that?

Of course that had been before. Before Sasuke. He smiles lightly to himself, the way it sounds like a marker in his mind, the beginning of an era. He *is* nervous. Technically they are wed now, he is a *husband* . *Sasuke’s* husband. Such a domestic thing, a mundane landmark so many had gone through, Kakashi has experienced things most wouldn’t dream or have nightmares about and yet *this* he finds most wondrous. He knows how to do plenty of things, has been lauded as a genius, but this is a role he cannot learn from a book or a training seminar.

As soon as they’d stepped into the hall they had been pulled from table to table, greeting people neither of them were keen to speak to. After a short reprieve to eat, Sasuke had been pulled aside by his father to speak to some of the other clan heads when Kakashi had taken a moment to escape to the terrace for some air.

“Kakashi.”

He turns around, seeing Mikoto standing there. Elegant in her fine navy kimono, every bit the Uchiha matriarch. Something about her has always had a calming effect on him. He remembers meeting her for the first time, a bundle in her arms that she passed along to

Fugaku before she'd knelt in front of him and taken his hand.

*I'm Mikoto, and that's Sasuke*, she'd said in greeting. Gentle as most mothers are with children, but her eyes had been calculating. He had met her considering gaze calmly. If nothing else, a Hatake never runs. He would see to that now. She'd been mostly quiet during the proceedings of the betrothal, regarding him critically until the paper was slid towards her. She must have seen something that satisfied her because her face had softened slightly as she took one last look at him before signing with a graceful flourish. Her parting words had been undemanding in their simplicity.

*I hope you'll become good friends.*

Kakashi greets her now with a low bow at the waist, "Thank you for organizing such a lovely ceremony."

She smiles and it looks so much like Sasuke, he finds himself looking past her, suddenly missing him.

"No need for such formality, Kakashi," she tilts her head, "I'm surprised my son isn't here with you."

He has the grace to look sheepish, "We've been accosted by elders and politicians left and right the whole night."

She hums, nodding.

"These events always turn into some competition in posturing. You should find him."

He remembers the note in his pocket then, shoved hastily into his hands before Sasuke had been dragged away from his side for the hundredth time and curses, fishing it out to unfurl.

Mikoto laughs next to him, reading over his shoulder.

“Couldn’t resist, could he.”

“He’s been spending a lot of time in the old shrine, reading the tablets and such. He stopped by the Konoha archives too, a few times. Wouldn’t tell me why. *Most* of the really old traditions have fallen out of favour, but some are easy enough,” her smile turns teasing.

She steps closer, smoothing down his lapels and eyeing his state before nodding approvingly.

“Go, find him. We can manage here. You don’t want him to be waiting too long. No one’s ever called Sasuke patient.”

He slips out when he has the chance, not wanting the attention or the teasing he knows will follow. Sasuke isn’t outside and he can’t sense his familiar lightning chakra nearby. Kakashi unfolds the little note then, reading it in the faint glow of light from inside the hall and the bare generosity of the moon.

*Come find me at midnight.*

Grinning, he eyes the dark horizon and the reflection of the moon in the river that runs through the Uchiha lands. Sasuke doesn’t intend to

make this hard, but he's been doing all the crossing and now he's asking Kakashi to come to him. To seek him out and take him for his own, *on* his own and with intent. A faint echo of a centuries old hunt, something a Hatake specializes in.

The river house is lit with lanterns when he arrives and ascends the steps, the ancient wood polished and refreshed. He admires the beautiful draperies and tapestries inside, the rich dark wood and soft linens. The house is unmistakably Uchiha, steeped in tradition and the warmth of their design. He sees a shadow slip behind a wall as he shuts the heavy doors and he follows, deliberately slow. The place is steeped in Sasuke's scent already, heightened in their little game of chase and sweeter than usual. Along the way he finds his path littered: Sasuke's wedding clothes, shed piece by piece. He follows them until the trail stops outside a door, a faint glow seeping out through the outline around it. Kakashi pauses, a hand on the wood, breathing deeply, feeling Sasuke's chakra on the other side and knowing Sasuke can feel his. He can feel it shift, despite his lack of sensory ability, knowing that must mean Sasuke's emotions are untethered, so strong that they are as potent to him now as killing intent would be in a battle.

He pushes open the door, stilling at the sight.

*Kami*, he thinks dazedly.

Sasuke is sitting in the middle of the large bed, legs bent beside him like a siren on a rockface, only instead of rough stone he sits in a thicket of soft white sheets and numerous pillows. He is a spot of brightness in the dimly lit room, flickering candlelight setting him alight.

Of course, an Uchiha would look comfortable among flames while Kakashi feels like just the sight of his now husband burns him from the inside out. Dark hair loose around his face, his skin warm and flushed, colour brought out by the deep red of the barely there robe

he's wearing, almost sheer in its thinness and only held together by a loose knot at his belly. Eyefuls of tempting skin, his chest and thighs and calves, hands flat on the bed in front of him. The little quirk of Sasuke's lips, a familiar smile that reveals the dimple Kakashi has memorized by now, is his undoing.

His eyes drop to the dark fur beneath Sasuke, a makeshift throne if he's ever seen one.

"You read the Hatake archives, too."

First, the chase up to the house - not what a full hunt through the woods would have been but a gentle approximation and now the pelt...he imagines Sasuke's skin sliding against it as he's taken, his hands curling into the fur, his bounty, his keep-

"Yes. Is it..." Sasuke trails off, looking somewhat unconfident suddenly, form curling in slightly and Kakashi realizes belatedly he'd let out a growl, "Is this okay?"

"More than."

He steps forward.

"Wait."

He stops immediately.

"I want a real commitment from you," Sasuke says, hands curling to

grip the pelt beneath him, “I want *this* for real.”

“Anything,” he finds himself saying, realizing at once that he means it and that he can trust Sasuke never to ask for more than he can give.

“I want you to leave ANBU.”

It’s not an unreasonable request...most people don’t want to be married to someone in ANBU, and it’s a young shinobi’s game anyway. Most shinobi leave of their own accord when they settle down. He simply hadn’t thought Sasuke would want him around so much, that he wouldn’t be more comfortable with his life as undisturbed as possible. Of course, things have changed since then.

“Done. Anything else?”

“Just one thing. It’s kind of an...ongoing request,” Sasuke’s expression shifts to a cheeky one, “*Marry* me. Properly.”

He grins behind his mask, “Marry you?”

“Yes.”

“Properly?”

“Mhmm.”

Kakashi hums, a teasing note in his tone when he speaks again, lifting

his hand to bare the gold band now there.

“Last I recall I married you just this afternoon, properly. Ceremony was quite nice.”

Sasuke tugs at the ring around his own finger, distractedly, sliding it up and down. Kakashi’s eyes drop to follow the movement.

“You didn’t. I would have remembered us... *marrying* in front of all those people,” he tilts his head, “That you highlight the ceremony is proof enough, I’ll make sure moving forward, your memory of tonight will return elsewhere, *Danna-sama* .”

He should perhaps be embarrassed at how his body reacts to the antiquated title, but Sasuke has a way of making everything sound that much better, sweeter.

He takes measured steps, much as he wants to devour Sasuke here they will have plenty of time and he will savour every bite. For now, it’s enough to kneel gently, take Sasuke’s upturned face between his hands and bend to kiss his forehead.

“You haven’t done this before?”

“I- no. But I’ve tried...some stuff. On my own.”

He lowers himself to settle in the bed, pulling Sasuke into his hold and grinning behind his mask when he goes easily, settling in Kakashi’s lap.



“Hm. And what does an unruly little thing like you picture?”

“You.”

“Since when?”

He’s teasing but the answer he gets is surprisingly honest.

“Since always.”

That’s a surprise.

“Tell me.”

“I pictured this alot. For years. You remember the actual first time we met?”

“You mean when I was ANBU?”

He’d never really acknowledged it, until now. That frantic day, seeing the absolute panic in Itachi’s eyes when Sasuke’s squad mate had burst through the gates, blood that was not his own decorating his vest. He’d flown after him of course, signalling the rest of them to follow. He’d avoided Sasuke before that meticulously.

Now, Sasuke’s hands are tugging at his clothes, brushing against his heated skin and slipping past his underwear. Bold in everything, he should have known, he thinks with some amusement that is quickly

replaced by a sharp arousal when a hand wraps around him.

“Mhm. Carried me back home in your arms, dropped by to make sure I was okay. Left *flowers* . How could I not? *Kami* , I wasted my nights that summer. I spent the next year hoping my mysterious future husband would measure up...to you. Little did I know.”

Kakashi is not immune to his pride and ego being so firmly stroked, especially when it's not the only thing Sasuke is stroking.

“Stand up,” Sasuke urges him, and he listens. He wonders if he'll always be as powerless as he feels now to anything said in that voice.

He stills at the edge of the bed, watching raptly as Sasuke tugs at his robes, the various silks and linings, until he can expose Kakashi completely. There is only a brief moment of Sasuke's head tilting up to meet his eyes before he dips down and takes Kakashi's cock into his mouth. His head falls back at the sensation. The soft, wet heat and slow slide only made all the more amazing by the way Sasuke is looking up at him, not breaking eye contact.

Sasuke had began on his knees, almost in seiza, but he relaxes out of it onto his bottom as he goes, legs bent at his sides on the wolf pelt as he bobs his head, one hand splayed out on the lush surface supporting himself and the other wrapped around Kakashi where his mouth can't reach. Kakashi watches him, one hand in his hair rubbing at his scalp, the other cupping the nape of Sasuke's neck without pressure. He doesn't think he'd ever thought such a lewd act could be described as loving, and yet Sasuke's ministrations and the look in his eyes fluttering up at him is exactly that. He lifts his unoccupied hand to entwine his fingers with one of Kakashi's and presses it to his cheek, eyes finally falling shut. Sasuke looks blissed out, entirely comfortable as his mouth works, slow and inexperienced but obviously eager, and it melts away any of his own remaining hesitation and the worry he'd felt that Sasuke felt obligated to service him this way or otherwise.

“Hey,” he says, pulling Sasuke’s head off him gently, “I don’t want to finish this way, not today.”

His breath hitches when Sasuke hums, sounding pleased before he pulls back, lips shiny and quirked into a smile that still manages to be innocent, one not that different from the one he wears when he’s mastered a new jutsu.

“Was I good?”

Kakashi breathes out a laugh, cupping Sasuke’s cheeks to pull him up so he can kiss him.

“Perfect.”

Sasuke shifts slightly in his hold, reaching around him and into the bag he’d surreptitiously dropped by the bed earlier.

“Courtesy of Ino. Although...the drawers are stocked, too. Everything but condoms of course...”

He grins at the way Sasuke’s eyes shift at that, despite what he’d been doing only moments before. He sits, keeping a hand around Sasuke’s waist while he looks through the little black bag, red tissue paper ruffling.

“Don’t tell me I’ll have to write her an extra thank you card...”

“We both might.”

Kakashi sifts through the items, brow raising at some of the offerings and noting them for later before he selects a benign looking bottle.

“You’re sure you want to do this tonight?”

“I was sure I wanted to do this two years ago.”

“Minx. Alright, lay back. Get comfortable. I’ll be right back.”

He steps out to the adjoined bathroom, grabbing a couple of towels and noting the heated tub already filled with water and smelling of lavender. The Uchiha really don’t leave much to chance, it seems, prepared in everything just as they are in battle. He pulls his mask off, setting it down on the counter, and slips off the heavier outer layers of his own kimono before he walks back into the bedroom.

He stills at the display, the red robe Sasuke had worn still hanging off his elbows and underneath him but now left open so Kakashi can see the delicate gold chains that decorate Sasuke, crisscrossing his torso and wrapped around his lovely thighs.

“Are you trying to kill me?” he asks, crawling over his prone form.

Sasuke blinks at him as he joins him in the bed, naked face visible clearly above him for the first time.

“What about you? You could have warned me,” he breathes, sitting up

to peer at him, and touch his cheekbones, nose, lips.

“That’s my line. Disappointed?”

“Not at all,” he murmurs, “Just sad I didn’t get to appreciate it sooner.”

He surges up to kiss him again and this time Kakashi’s hands wander over bare skin, catching on the gold and slipping under it to tease at the impossibly soft flesh that blankets his lithe but strong frame. Sasuke’s hands do the same, mapping out the ridges of his abdomen and the lines of his back. Fingers grip tighter against him when he lowers himself enough for their bodies to grind against each other.

Sasuke’s hips move wave-like against him and Kakashi groans, picturing them doing this dance above him. Now though, surrounded by lanterns and silk and the careful watch of the Naka, he will spoil his Uchiha prince the way their gods intended. He slips a hand underneath the small of Sasuke’s back just as he tilts his own hips down, relishing in the gasp that earns him, and leans down to whisper in an ear.

“Let’s get married then.”

\* \* \*

Sasuke sends a thankful praise into the air that the river house is so far removed from all the others and blessedly empty save for them. He’s not trying to be so loud but his reactions come unbidden, mostly from surprise and novelty. Kakashi’s laughs skirt across his belly every time he jumps and squirms, one large hand soothing against his thigh that rests on a broad shoulder and the other busy getting him ready for something he’s only been dreaming about for years now. He’s

nervous, mostly at the idea of embarrassing himself, but when Kakashi presses a gentle kiss to the underside of his knee he peeks at the handsome face between his legs and the soft look on his new husband's face, he finds himself losing some inhibitions. He feels warm, loved, the soft pelt brushing his skin reminding him of Kakashi's promise to him and the house itself a symbol of comfort and protection.

Kakashi's face isn't in it's usual nonchalant set, his cheeks instead warm and slightly flushed lower lip caught between the pearly gates of his teeth as his eyes stay focused on Sasuke and nothing else. His breath is measured, as always, but Sasuke can see it waver slightly as he lets out a small keen at a particularly skillful twist of Kakashi's hand. The answering smile on Kakashi's face makes him turn his head away, uselessly hiding the flush on his face in the pillow. There is a hunger and want in the other man's eyes that make him feel more naked than he already is.

"Oh, no you don't," Kakashi breathes, the hand on his thigh moving, reaching out to turn his head back by the chin, "You haven't spent a minute of this whole thing shy, you don't get to start now. Look at me."

That gets him to smile and he obeys, but throws a wrist across his mouth to muffle wayward gasps and whimpers he still can't control. Not that he's been trying overly hard, he's been an open book with Kakashi from the start, perhaps embarrassingly so, but he doesn't think they'd have made it here mutually committed had he not been.

Kakashi's patience is both a blessing and a curse and Sasuke knows that it will come up against his lack of it soon enough, the amused look on Kakashi's face becoming more pronounced as he cants his hips down with a frown, wiggling pointedly around the large fingers inside him. He feels good and he wants to feel even better, wants to feel Kakashi finally taking what he's been offering, unapologetically.

He feels wound up and spent at once when hands withdraw and there is a rustling as Kakashi cleans himself off and shuffles up until they're face to face, his wedding garb discarded on the floor somewhere with Sasuke's and finally, blessedly, entirely naked. Sasuke's arms are still trapped in his inner robe, resting under him and for good reason too he thinks, going red again at the wetness he feels beneath him. He doesn't bother pulling his arms out of the garment when he reaches up to tug Kakashi closer.

"You know, technically, *traditionally* , I'm still not really married. I could still be snatched up by some Hyuuga or Uzumaki."

"Oh? Should I leave then? I'm sure they're still milling about the hall if you'd rather one of them-"

Kakashi playfully retreats, grinning when Sasuke's ankles lock around him.

"Not allowed. Ever. Not anymore. I'm telling the Hokage to post a declaration."

"Hm," Kakashi leans back over him and lines himself up, kissing up his neck and murmuring into his ear, "Well, I'm definitely not going anywhere now."

Sasuke sucks in a breath at the push he feels, his back lifting. Kakashi's hand finds its way underneath it, palm wide against the small of his back. Sasuke whines, a low plaintive groan that he hides in Kakashi's neck. This might be easier were he on his knees, but he'd wanted to see Kakashi, be able to kiss as he pleased and hold him. His hand grips Kakashi's shoulder and the other slides into his hair, tugging in a way that might be too harsh but he isn't scolded for it. Instead, he feels lips on his shoulder, soothing along with words murmured into his ear.

It doesn't feel good exactly, not all of it at first, not *physically* anyway but this is more to Sasuke than just a slide of skin. Any temporary discomfort is mostly overtaken by the ringing in his head at the realization of what he's doing and who with. He loves the hands on him, their roughness and the sureness of their grip. He adores the voice in his ears, dulcet tones and words that he's sure now he can categorize as loving. The brush of a nose against his neck makes him sigh, then laugh softly when it tickles.

"How do you feel?" Kakashi asks after a minute or two, or maybe ten, Sasuke isn't sure.

Kakashi rocks slowly in him, each push deeper than the last and sending new tingles through Sasuke's body. There is pain, certainly, even if it's not much by now. There is pleasure too, more of it as the seconds drag on, as he lifts himself and moves experimentally, focuses on the spaces they're connected in the most obscene ways as well as the most innocent, the hard drag and the gentle brush. He gasps as one begins to outweigh the other, a shudder travelling up his spine and encouraging his undulations.

"Good," he breathes against Kakashi's lips, pausing when his mouth is easily pulled into a kiss and then another, he pulls himself away with reluctance, resting his forehead against Kakashi's and peering at his eyes in the dark.

"I know everyone's expecting us to be doing this," he whispers, "Why does that make it feel even better? I thought forbidden things were thrilling but this..."

"Yeah?" Kakashi murmurs, lips at his throat, "You think they're all expecting me to kiss you like this?"



He's about to respond when Kakashi's hands grip at his hips, pulling him down on him just as he thrusts forward.

"Or fuck you like this?"

Sasuke whimpers at that, the feeling as much as the words, something snapping in him as his mind wanders to the clan.

"You know this was supposed to be a punishment really," he breathes, hands finding Kakashi's forearms and gripping tight, "For us both. Well, not me directly. Certainly for you. But they gravely miscalculated there, I think."

This seems to spur Kakashi on, riling him up enough that his thrusts begin to lose their steadiness, the easy pace he'd been moving with. Sasuke finds himself wanting more of this Kakashi, uncontrolled and raw.

"They expected us to hate this, each other...wanted us to be *miserable* with it. You know hundreds of years ago," Sasuke continues, letting his hands travel down to find Kakashi's hands on his thighs and rest over them, "This would happen in the shrine. Make sure we appease Amaterasu with our union. All very romantic sounding. A lot of times, elders would be there too. Maybe...more of the clan. Just imagine how much they'd hate to see how wrong they were, Danna-sama."

He keens when that inspires a particularly harsh thrust, Kakashi brushing up against something inside him that makes him see stars. His vision blurs slightly, head swimming when he's pulled up off his back and into Kakashi's lap, gravity forcing him further down.

"Oh, you were sent to ruin me," Kakashi's voice is gruff, "Those stone tablets sure sound riveting. Spent an awful lot of time down there, did

you?”

“They’re a good read,” Sasuke says, squirming in a way that gets Kakashi’s hands to tighten around his hips, “I’ll show you sometime. There are even pictures.”

Kakashi only feels a little ashamed at how his body reacts to that bit of information, the idea of showing the elders and the brass that saw fit to try and commandeer their lives just how *much* their plan had backfired. To make clear that if their union is to be a punishment, it is the most divine punishment of all. He will not kiss a ring, will not prostrate to their whims, but kneeling to worship at the apex of Sasuke’s thighs is a different matter entirely.

“I don’t think I’d care,” Sasuke continues, speaking into his ear as he begins to roll his hips, feeling the way Kakashi had jumped inside him at that, “I’d let them watch. I’d let anyone watch.”

He growls then, nose pressed to the juncture between Sasuke’s shoulder and neck and breathing in the scents of bergamot and sandalwood and *Sasuke* . He lets his teeth sink in there, hard enough to leave a mark just as his fingers are against Sasuke’s hips. He encourages their movement, becoming almost frantic now.

“Go on then, pretend they are.”

He lets Sasuke move at his own pace, not much different than his own, both rushing to their peaks. The sight of him, knees sliding against the pelt at Kakashi’s sides, robe now torn in places and barely hanging on, slivers of gold that sparkle by lamplight as he moves to chase his own pleasure. He wraps a large hand around Sasuke’s cock, the slide wet and obscene as he almost sobs against Kakashi’s neck.

“Picture them here,” he whispers, a side of himself normally dormant rearing its head, “Watching their Uchiha princeling get deflowered by the bloodline thief they hate and squirming for it.”

It's not like him to speak this way normally, but something about Sasuke now is making him feel wilder, untethered perhaps for the first time ever. To think that the one meant to be his chain would be the one to snap his inhibition like this...

“Kakashi,” Sasuke's whine is almost embarrassed, but his hips begin to move wildly at the words and he twitches in Kakashi's grip, a harsh twist of his hand causing a choked off moan, “Please...”

He takes pity on his young husband, at the way his knees begin to slip uselessly as they seek purchase in his desperation, hands sliding down Kakashi's back as his grip weakens. He tilts Sasuke back to lie down again, interlocking their hands by Sasuke's head on the pillow and letting their foreheads rest together. He sets a near brutal pace, knowing neither of them will last much longer. Sasuke almost stops blinking entirely, pupils blown wide and the sheen on his golden skin almost glittering.

He growls as he drives Sasuke to a climax that echoes in the empty house, letting go of his hand only to stroke him off as he comes, back arching up off the bed. He follows quickly at the pulsing grip of Sasuke's body around him, marking him inside in a claim that he's sure will please every god they will pay homage to at the shrine tomorrow.

He moves to slide out, but Sasuke stops him.

“Not yet,” he whispers, “Can we...”

He nods, pulling Sasuke up so he can lie back, letting Sasuke rest on his chest. He strokes his back, smiling when Sasuke noses into his neck and just breathes. He moves his hips a little, this way and that experimentally.

“Keep doing that and you won’t be nodding off to sleep anytime soon.”

“Hmm, you can have me then, too,” Sasuke murmurs sleepily, “I don’t mind.”

“ I really need to do something about this mouth of yours.”

“That can be arranged,” Sasuke rests his chin on his chest, eyes tired but satisfied to Kakashi’s pleasure, “And speak for yourself, when did you become so aggressive?”

“Sorry...”

“I’m not complaining. I liked it. I loved it. I love everything about you.”

He tilts his head forward to kiss Sasuke gently, his cheeks and his forehead and both eyelids as they begin to grow heavy. He gently lays him back down, slipping out with a small gasp from the younger and reaches down for the washcloths he’d set down by the bed earlier, cleaning them both off. He presses a kiss to Sasuke’s head before he steps out to put out the lanterns and candles throughout the rest of the house. When he returns, Sasuke is waiting still, naked form looking as relaxed as it does debauched. He curls into Kakashi’s side immediately when he joins him again, pulling the covers over them both.

Kakashi whispers three little words as they both doze off into sleep, feeling the curve of a smile against his neck.

\* \* \*

Sasuke wakes slowly, frowning when he realizes he's alone in bed but he can hear water running in the adjoining bathroom. He stretches, feeling warm and content, if a little sore. This far out into the Uchiha lands, there are no village sounds, only the gentle song of the land waking up along with him. He slides out of bed, not bothering with a robe as he wanders into the bathroom.

"Hey," Kakashi looks up from where he'd been testing the temperature of the water filling the tub. He walks over to kiss Sasuke's temple. "Get freshened up, let me take care of the bath and breakfast."

"Have to admit I didn't expect you to be so domestic."

"I'm full of surprises."

Kakashi drops some oils into the steaming tub and then steps out. Sasuke cleans up at the sink, almost humming to himself as he swirls minty sweet toothpaste around. Kakashi returns just as he's trying to find the clasps on the body chain he'd ended up sleeping in.

"Let me."

He undoes them, letting the metal slip of Sasuke and fall to the floor before he takes his hand so they can step into the still hot bath. The chain had left little indents on his supple skin, Kakashi taking the time to massage them out in places where they are more stark. Sasuke sighs

happily at the heat, leaning back into Kakashi's chest. It's calm at first, wrapped in the warm embrace of the sweet smelling water and Kakashi's arms. Soon though, he becomes distracted by the feel of hard muscle, the length that he'd taken inside him not long ago apparent at his back. He begins to squirm and Kakashi obviously takes notice, it doesn't take a genius shinobi to become aware of his arousal for the other man and he wonders if he will always be this helpless to it.

Kakashi's hand leaves his own to wander down his body, one hand slipping under the water to stroke at him softly, the other's fingers dipping further down.

Sasuke hisses gently, letting out a frustrated huff. Kakashi kisses his neck, humming the word *cute* into the skin there.

"There's more than one way to take care of that," he holds Sasuke's hips, taking care not to jostle him and the water too much, "Turn around, sit on the lip of the tub and hang on."

He does as he's told, braces himself on the ledge looking at Kakashi curiously, until his thighs are hoisted up onto broad shoulders.

"Just, relax," Kakashi says with a dark look before his handsome face disappears from view, "And let me kiss you where they're least expecting it."

\* \* \*

That evening, they pay homage at the small shrine on the grounds of the house before they begin the walk back over to the hall, where a less formal dinner will be served, traditionally to mark a successful

consummation.

“I wish we could stay in. I don’t much want to fend off the gossip that’s bound to be about the day after our wedding night.”

“I hate to break it to you, but us staying in for days would probably only add fuel to that fire.”

Sasuke sighs, swinging his hand gently between them. He’d changed into a light grey yukata to compliment the deep green of Kakashi’s and though they make a handsome couple he knows they are in for more than just congratulations once they enter the hall.

“It’s okay,” Kakashi murmurs as they step up to the hall, the sounds of people inside already filtering in, “I can handle them.”

They’re greeted by Sasuke’s immediate family, Mikoto pinching Sasuke’s cheek and brushing Kakashi’s affectionately.

“Well, don’t you two look *very* well rested and utterly exhausted at the same time.”

She hands them drinks before either of them can respond, which is probably for the best. Shisui claps his shoulder with a wink while Fugaku and Itachi remain more subdued, though both incline their heads at him as they mill about and socialize with the clan.

Kakashi is speaking with Shisui when it happens, not five minutes into their arrival. Sasuke had been standing a few paces away, conversing with his father and an elder of the clan who makes no attempt to prevent his voice from carrying.

“So,” the man says, a cruel twitch to the set of his mouth, “How is it being tied to the mutt?”

“Yes, we were rather worried about dear Sasuke when he didn’t surface on time, we rather thought he might have been mauled,” another adds.

Well, he thinks with a bitter huff, they weren’t wrong on that point. Kakashi pretends he can’t hear it, hides the tightness around his eyes like he’s always done. He can see Shisui go rigid and lays a hand on his arm.

“Stand down,” he says, using his Captain’s voice. He will not have his friend at odds with his clan over him.

This is nothing new, really. He only feels bad that Sasuke has to deal with the humiliation. Mikoto looks about to say something from across the room, her eyes sharp as glass, before a smooth voice cuts in.

“Danna-sama is everything I could want in a man and husband.”

He nearly chokes on nothing, hearing that. The sound of whispered conversations still around them as others had picked up on Sasuke’s voice. Clearly *also* meant to carry.

Fugaku clears his throat.

“I think we should sit to the meal.”



“No, father, I have been meaning to thank the great elders here. It would be remiss of me not to,” Sasuke walks over to him then, taking his arm to curl his own around it and looking up at him, there is something soft in his face, something assuring, before a spark of mischief lights them up, “Really, I couldn’t have hoped to have attract the attention of someone as illustrious as Hatake Kakashi if it weren’t for your giving the fates a little push. So intelligent and accomplished. Strong. A fine example of Konoha and the Sharingan wherever he goes, I’m sure you’ll all agree. A man our fallen clansman, who gifted him the eye, was proud to call a comrade. And I can say - without question now - handsome and *very* virile, too.”

There are good natured laughs at this from some and the tiny smile Sasuke gives here, his cheeks colouring perfectly. Kakashi can’t decide if it’s all a ruse or not but either way he knows he’s in *trouble* .

“Danna-sama,” Sasuke says again, peering up at him like he’s a beacon, “Thank you for being my husband. I promise I won’t let you regret it and I thank you for your guidance now and in the future.”

He leans up slightly then to kiss Kakashi’s cheek and then his lips over the mask and Kakashi takes his hand palm to palm, reeling, but feeling like he should show his appreciation for what Sasuke had just done - it isn’t insignificant. Far from it, it’s a declaration meant to put everyone else in their place, as much as Sasuke in his. He’d firmly placed himself in deference to Kakashi, in front of not only his clan, but the other nobles in the village. Many of whom had spent decades scorning Kakashi and his father. *All* of whom had expected Kakashi to be under the Uchiha’s thumb, under Sasuke’s, downtrodden and supplicating.

There are little hums and cooing coming from the younger attendees, hushed exclamations of the romance of it all. Kakashi spies a small smile on Mikoto’s face, the tiny nod she gives Sasuke as they pass by on their way to their seats. Finally seated, they are flanked by Sasuke’s parents on one side and Itachi and Shisui on the other. Insulated for

the moment, he bends his head to Sasuke's ear.

"Couldn't warn a guy, hm?"

"Danna-sama simply *must* forgive me."

He chances a little pinch to Sasuke's side, grinning at the tiny jump that gets him. Sasuke looks anything but angry though, his cheeks now colour from the laughs that escape him hidden behind the napkin he'd picked up.

"Stop speaking like you're at the daimyo's court a century ago."

"Hm. Fine. For now. I think this might be fun to revisit later tonight back at the house."

*Kami* , is he ever in trouble.

The rest of the meal goes by without much fuss and Kakashi finds that though he is still not entirely embraced by the clan, he can easily picture dinners spent with Sasuke's closer kin, Sunday breakfasts when they're not on missions, spars with Fugaku and nights on the town with Shisui and Itachi if he can drag him out. He sees, for the first time in a long time, *family* .

They are standing outside the hall saying their goodbyes when an older Uchiha elder comes by, on her way out.

"Well, I'm glad to see you are pleased with your lot in life, Sasuke. But

what a pity it's a barren union. ”

It takes all of his patience not to react, but before he can say anything Sasuke squeezes his hand.

Sasuke's other hand goes to his belly and he sighs audibly; for a moment Kakashi thinks he's actually upset by the dig at them being unable to have children but then Sasuke looks up meeting the woman's eyes with an earnestness he knows isn't genuine.

“Yes, and I would have had a veritable litter in the womb by now, too, after last night.”

The woman goes an unhealthy shade of red while Kakashi coughs subtly. He avoids looking at Fugaku whose long suffering sigh he can hear across the front garden, instead meeting the absolute beam on Shisui's face before sliding to Mikoto. To his horror, she only gives him a quick wink.

*Trouble* , he thinks again, squeezing Sasuke's palm back as the woman stutters and walks away mumbling.

He wouldn't have it any other way.

\* \* \*

“Last box,” Sasuke says, setting it down in the living room, once empty and layered in a coating of dust they'd vacuumed away before filling it with their shared belongings.

He walks over to where Kakashi has dropped onto the futon they'd set up, tired after a whole day of moving, and plants himself in his lap. Kakashi drags them both down to lay back, rubbing Sasuke's back.

"The grounds are big enough for quite the garden," he says into the fabric of Kakashi's shirt.

"Yeah, he um, my father liked to garden."

"Then we'll make it the best one in the village."

Kakashi's fingers comb through his hair, a feeling he can never get enough of even months into their marriage.

"Are you sure about this? I can live in the district, it's not-"

"Yes, I am," Sasuke lifts his head, "I'm not going to let you be under anyone's thumb anymore. We'll live wherever we damn well please, and I happen to like your family home."

Kakashi thumbs his cheek gently.

"That's all you...you've given me both family and home. Didn't think I'd have either ever again."

Sasuke feels his heart stutter. Kakashi is always doing this to him, saying the most simple things in a way that makes him ache.

“Well. You're ours now.”

“But mostly yours?”

“Always.”

\* \* \*

[image]

*Note: Hello yes I doodled this months ago when I was thinking of their wedding. Please excuse the fact that it is on lined paper and also the messed up eyes, I decided to draw with pen -\_-*

## Chapter End Notes

Mikoto isn't a normal mom, she's a cool mom.

Okay for real I have no idea how this became like 30k words. I loved the idea of the clan traditions around the wedding, and this is basically a little dip into those ideas. Had a lot of fun with this one, I hope you enjoyed as well!

End Notes

Find me [here](#)

Please [drop by the Archive and comment](#) to let the creator know if you enjoyed their work!